BING

Summer
2014

No. 167

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::

(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

Summertime greetings to all of my fellow ICC members and associates. We hope that 2014 has brought good things to you and your families, with more to come in the second half. And, as you will read, there are some exciting things in store for Bing Crosby aficionados during the next few months!

One reoccurring theme of these little essays I write each issue has been Blu-ray format DVD's and the release of Bing's films in this high-definition format. Well I am pleased to inform you that the details of not only one, but two of his films are forthcoming. In fact, one of them will be available, if not by the time you read this, shortly thereafter.

And there will be one HUGE Christmas present for all of us coming up in December on television. Stay tuned for further details of this exciting new TV production honoring Bing!

Member Roger E. Schore of New York always keeps us informed of Bing mentions in the newspapers, and in shows and revues playing in the Big Apple. Recently, he sent along a program from the New York Theatre Company for a production titled *Inventing Mary Martin: the Revue of a Lifetime*. Roger said it's quite entertaining and that Mary's association with Bing is evoked when a male and female cast member perform "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie" as a duet. As Roger said, the male vocalist "dons a Tyrolean hat as well as a pipe for ID purposes (as if they were necessary!)."

Finally, for those members who tune in to my weekly radio program Nostalgia Radio Time (that includes the 'Bing Sings' feature each week), I'm now on the air an hour earlier. You can catch the show at 9 pm central time, 10 pm in the East, streaming at www.1420thebreeze.com or for your smart phone or tablet using the TuneIn Radio app. Archived shows are available at *The Breeze* website, including the 100th episode with ICC honorary member Regis Philbin.

Now it's on to Malcolm for the rest of the Crosby scoop.

Greg Van Beek **tvanbeek@execpc.com**

Greg has set the scene very nicely for there are indeed some good things on the horizon, including a new statue of Bing. Also in this edition, following diligent research by Greg, John Newton has some exciting details of recordings from early Kraft Music Hall broadcasts which have not been heard since 1935/36 which I am sure will have most of us drooling.

Brian Willey, the producer of the BBC's wonderful series about Bing in 1973, has recently discovered us and has written a fascinating article about his experience of working with Bing.

Bob Phillips, who worked for Bing Crosby Enterprises in the early 1950s, tells us all about those times in a major article, Greg Van Beek brings us up-to-date with his latest acquisitions and there's news of the revised discography of Bing's recordings.

Keith Parkinson takes an in-depth look at Bing's film songs on v-disc and Ken Crossland makes a nostalgic trip back to his formative years. Gord Atkinson returns with details of his interviews with Bing in 1975 which are to be used in a forthcoming PBS-TV special. Martin McQuade has several interesting contributions in this issue and Carolyn Schneider takes a stroll down memory lane. The 'Bing's Basement' broadcasts have been continuing and we have full details in *Bing on the Box*. Richard Baker is still awaiting all the goodies we are promised but he tells us what may be coming.

It is a real honour and pleasure to welcome Bing's co-star Mary Carlisle as an honorary member and Adam Swanson has written an article for us about his meeting with her.

Barbara Walters, the TV journalist and personality has recently retired and to mark this, our back cover has a photo of her with Der Bingle when they got together in 1977.

I hope to see some of you at Leeds in October. A full programme is coming together with Ken Barnes, Bob Phillips and Perry Huntoon hoping to be there to make presentations. I have some rare items to show and play, and as usual we shall have a 2-hour DVD of songs from Bing's films to finish off the evening.

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

It is a pleasure to begin my report by commending our generous North American members for their financial support in 2014. Their continued generosity rewarded the ICC with an equivalent sum of $6 per active member and we are very grateful for this essential support.

The ICC account remains in the black and we will be able to cover our costs for 2014/15, but thereafter, it will be inevitable (due to inflation, declining membership) that subscriptions will have to rise. I will report to members in spring 2015 with an update on our finances. Wig Wiggins' and Jim Reilly's **Definitive Crosby Discography** is available to order via the insert included with this issue of BING and I would like to congratulate Wig and Jim on a splendid production. Their new publication builds on the previous Bing Crosby from 78 to CD book and it is a cornucopia of interesting facts about Bing's commercial studio recordings. Additional information is given on other aspects of Bing's career and no member should be without this authoritative account of Bing's recordings. Wig and Jim have spent many years compiling this excellent book and I urge all members to buy a copy for their Bing library.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that their association with the club will bring them much interest and enjoyment.

UNITED STATES

Ken Berryhill, (Memphis, Tennessee), Jane Fitzgerald (Cincinnati, Ohio), Bruce Hanson, (Norfolk, Virginia), Dale Kuntz (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), Mike Moore, (Wolf Lake, Illinois), Adam Swanson (Shenandoah, Iowa), Steve Spears (Fallbrook, California).

DONATIONS

The ICC is very fortunate to have generous benefactors who consistently support the club with their financial contributions and we are pleased to acknowledge gifts from:-

UNITED STATES

Scott Ables, Carmela Amari, Jack Boyle, Cliff Brisbois, Thomas Chevrette, James Clifford, Howard Crosby, James Crowley, Milton Cummings, David Currie, George de Lodzia, Stanley Diebel, Anthony DiFlorio, Laurence Doyle, Joseph Duncan, Helen Feiereisen, Ron Field, Arne Fogel, David Foe, William Fowler, John Holland, Michael Keiser, Laurence Kieran, Marcia Kukla, Robert Larsson, Joyce Lundberg, Ralph Morris, Paul Murphy, Al O'Hagan, Edward Press, Ruth Prigozy, Michael Reilly, Dave Richards, Rev Eugene Roberts, Gregg Russo, Ted Schoemberg, Richard Shoemaker, Ed Sinnott, Marq Stankowski, Michael Strada, Ernest Sutkowski, Greg Van Beek, Charles Van Riper, Charles Vincent, Ben Whiteley, Norman Wolfe, Judy Wysokowski.

CANADA

Alan Matheson, Dave Odell, Scott Payne, Don Roegele, Britton Smith

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Chris Hitchcock, Dermot Tallon, Eddie McGinley.

UNITED KINGDOM

John Salisbury, Gwen Harvey, Ron Holder, Chris Symmonds, Hannah Monaghan, Prof. John Norris Wood, Leslie Mills, Bert Hamblett, Rod Owen, John Tracy, Jim Reilly, John Marshall, Colin Stewart, John Cook, Ian Patience, Maurice Downs.

BELGIUM

Marc Matelart,

To all who give additional and generous gifts to the ICC we extend our sincere thanks.

DEATHS

Sadly, we have learned of the deaths of:-

Carol Edelblute (Hartford, Wisconsin), Norman Wolfe (Cumming, Georgia), Joan Hunt (King's Lynn, Norfolk), Roy Cole (Halesowen, West Midlands), Frank Wilgaus (Cleethorpes, N E Lincolnshire), Cyril Stansfield (Batley, West Yorkshire)

We extend our sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of the above.

(Editor: Norman Wolfe was a good friend of mine whose occasional tongue in cheek letters to the Editor always produced a smile. His book about Bing – 'Troubadour' – adopted a different approach to the subject and was well received by ICC members. We met on several occasions in Florida and in Atlanta and he and Ruth were always delightful company. I shall miss him.)

BING CROSBY ON CD

This is my usual reminder that the following attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £8.50 and the rest of the world £9.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 10

BING CROSBY in the Hall – Rare Live Recordings from KMH 1937 – 1946

BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors

BING CROSBY sings for the ARMED FORCES RADIO SERVICE

LEEDS 2014 (49th meeting) - Sunday October 5th

This is the penultimate Leeds tribute to Bing and I look forward to sharing the day with new attendees and our regular cohort of enthusiastic members.

Until winter, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton **mdcrampton@gmail.com**

American Masters to profile Bing

As hinted by Greg, the prestigious and long-running PBS-TV series *American Masters* is to feature Bing in December. *American Masters* produces biographies on artists, actors and writers of the United States who have left a profound impact on the nation's popular culture and it is entirely appropriate that they should select Bing. The series is produced by WNET in New York City.

The press release says:

"BING CROSBY, a profile of the most popular and influential multi-media star of the first half of the 20th century from Emmy-winning director Robert Trachtenberg, on December 26."

Among those taking part are Kathryn Crosby, Mary Crosby, Michael Feinstein and Ken Barnes. Ken, who hopes to attend our Leeds meeting this year, emailed me about this in April saying:

"Last month, I was working in Los Angeles and was asked to participate in a new documentary on Bing - for the "American Masters" series. While being interviewed, I met up with Kathryn (who looks very good and healthy) and Mary. Both were in the documentary. Also met with Robert Bader who tells me they have lots of plans for more Bing releases."

Gord Atkinson's interviews with Bing for his Crosby Years series are also being used and Gord discusses this in his article later in this issue.

To some extent, Bing has been fading from the public view in recent times and hopefully this program should do much to reverse the trend.

A Visit with Mary Carlisle

Actress Mary Carlisle has recently consented to be one of our honorary members. Adam Swanson had the great pleasure of meeting with Mary earlier in the year and he tells us all about it.

As a young person with a great passion for music of the 1920s and '30s, the opportunity to interact with the stars and musicians I admire most is slim. There are a few still active today, like "Baby" Rose Marie and Jane Withers, but they were children during the Golden Era. When I discovered the whereabouts of major 1930s movie star Mary Carlisle through mutual friends, naturally, I was *thrilled*! Better yet, they offered me the chance to play the piano for Mary in person.

I first learned of Mary because of my interest in old sheet music. Mary is best known for starring in three of Bing Crosby's Paramount musicals: *College Humor* (1933), *Double or Nothing* (1937), and *Doctor Rhythm* (1938). For anyone else who collects sheet music, Mary's photo appeared on no less than eleven songs with Bing, including the title songs from *Double or Nothing* and *Doctor Rhythm*, which were eventually cut from the films. Beautifully restored versions of the first two movies are available on DVD, but, sadly, *Doctor Rhythm* has yet to be reissued.

Immediately after discovering Mary was alive and "kicking" (literally... which she demonstrated by the piano!), I began watching her films and playing the songs from her movies with Bing. The songs were so good I memorized every one quickly. In January 2014, I flew to California from college in Colorado especially to meet Mary! The time we spent together was as wonderful as could be imagined, and a video of the afternoon is now on YouTube (just search for "Adam Swanson and Mary Carlisle").

As soon as I told her that I was a pianist, Mary said with delight, "Did you know I was in three movies with Bing Crosby?" In order to show her how much I truly love the music from her films, I asked her to sit right next to the piano with me. Then I launched into one of Bing's early hits, "Learn to Croon." Just as I had hoped, Mary seemed to be as thrilled as me! Mary started her career with MGM in 1929 (lying about her age to get a contract) and co-starred in *College Humor* with Bing when she was only nineteen years old. Not only was this an important role for Mary, but it was one of Bing's first starring roles as well. "Learn to Croon" was a significant hit and remained one of Mary's favorite songs.

I continued with a medley from *Double or Nothing*. The music for many of the songs from *Double or Nothing* and *Doctor Rhythm* was written by James V. ("Jimmie") Monaco, who had a very long and successful

career as a songwriter, with hits going back to the 1910s, such as "You Made Me Love You (I Didn't Want to Do It)" and "Row, Row, Row." The songs from *Double or Nothing* became well-known standards and were recorded by many artists besides Bing. Alice Faye sang "All You Want to Do Is Dance," "The Moon Got in My Eyes," and "It's the Natural Thing to Do" on a number of particularly great radio broadcasts with Hal Kemp and His Orchestra. Gifted songwriter Jimmie Monaco also wrote for other films of Bing's, too, including *If I Had My Way* (Universal, 1940).

Mary, or "Queen Mary" as her shirt said, is lovely, gracious, and incredibly sharp for a woman of any age. She kept us laughing nearly all afternoon. One of the biggest guffaws came when I asked her to tell her favorites stories about Bing. She replied, "Oh, I know a lot about Bing… but I'm a lady!" She continued, "There was a lot of talk about Bing and myself at one time, but it wasn't true at all. But people love to gossip. And the fact that we were together at many different things."

Over the years, Mary and Bing became very good friends. She has many stories about their friendship she loves to tell including one about a trip to Gonzaga University in October 1937.

> *"Bing was going to Gonzaga, his school, to do a show, and he called and said, "I'd love you to come along." He was going up to entertain and raise some money...I heard all the stories about Bing... you can throw them all in the ocean. He was one of the smartest, nicest... and a wonderful friend."*

Bing and Mary in *Doctor Rhythm*

Near the end of our visit, I had the privilege of watching *Doctor Rhythm* with Mary herself. It is simply a light-hearted musical with such other talent as Beatrice Lillie, Andy Devine, Rufe Davis, and Sterling Holloway. Funnily enough, at the end of the movie, Mary said, "Well, that certainly wasn't one of our best pictures. I can see why it was the last one." I asked Mary if Bea Lillie was as funny off-screen as she was on-screen, and she said she didn't think so. Bea Lillie was given an unusually large role in the film, so a friend commented, "Less Bea Lillie and more Mary Carlisle!"

Mary's career outside of her films with Bing was equally important. She also starred in *Handy Andy* with Will Rogers and Robert Taylor (Fox, 1934), *Kentucky Kernels* with comedians Wheeler and Woolsey (RKO, 1934), *Rovin' Tumbleweeds* with Gene Autry (Republic, 1939), and dozens of others. Mary was a fine dancer and even sang "One Little Kiss" in *Kentucky Kernels* (for which she also learned a remarkable southern accent!) Mary speaks often of William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies, who became good friends, too. Mary spent a great deal of time at the Hearst Castle and joined them on a memorable trip across Europe in August and September 1936. When she returned, Bing Crosby's Talent Agency helped her join Paramount Studios. In the 1940s, Mary retired from acting and started working for the Elizabeth Arden Salon in Beverly Hills.

On February 3, 2014, Mary celebrated her one-hundredth birthday. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a delightful person in this world, let alone one who was a significant star in the Golden Age of Hollywood. I am beyond lucky to have had the opportunity to meet her and share my passion for music of that era. I plan to release solo piano recordings of music from the three Bing Crosby/Mary Carlisle films on my next CD for Rivermont Records, which is high-quality label primarily featuring ragtime and early jazz. Please follow Mary's new page on Facebook to see beautiful photographs from her days in motion pictures and occasional updates on her activities.

Adam Swanson

Saratoga, California: Kathryn Crosby sings in Rodgers and Hart tribute

Kathryn Crosby took part in a tribute to Rodgers and Hart on June 1. The local press coverage anticipated the event saying:

Local fans of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart—who produced some of the most gorgeous melodies of the 20th century—are in for a treat. On June 1, South Bay Musical Theatre will present a tribute to composer Rodgers and lyricist Hart, starring 18 singers who have all appeared in SBMT productions. Joining the ensemble will be guest artist Kathryn Crosby, the Hollywood starlet who became the second wife of crooner and Oscar-winning actor Bing Crosby…

Rodgers and Hart collaborated on 28 stage musicals and a half dozen films during their partnership. The alliance began in 1919 when they worked on a show as students at Columbia University. From then until Hart died in 1943, the duo was responsible for Broadway classics like *Pal Joey, Babes in Arms, A Connecticut Yankee* and *On Your Toes*.

Rodgers and Hart churned out in excess of 500 songs, among them "Bewitched, Bothered and

Bewildered," "The Lady Is a Tramp" and "Blue Moon." If the pair had written just one of these gems and none other, that would have been enough to gain them lasting fame.

Despite Kathryn Crosby's early career as an actress pretty much ending once she and Bing wed in 1957, she is no stranger to musicals. In 1996 she appeared in a Broadway production of Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's *State Fair.*

Three years later, the mom of three (including daughter Mary of "Who Shot J.R. Ewing?" fame) attended a South Bay Musical Theatre production of *State Fair.* According to C. Michael Traw, who has produced shows for SBMT, Crosby has liked the company ever since.

It was Traw who had the bright idea of asking Crosby, 80, to take part in this Rodgers and Hart salute. She "was so delighted that I asked her to sing with all of us," he says, "and we are so thrilled that she accepted our invitation."

Bing's Former House For Sale

Any time one of Bing's former homes comes on the market it makes a splash in the newspapers and so it was in March when the property at 101 Robin Road, Hillsborough was advertised for sale at $7.9m.

Bing was reported to have purchased the house late in 1963 for $175,000 and the family moved into it in January 1964.

Bing had selected and bought the property himself but Kathryn hated it on sight. She wrote:

> My worst fears were realized when I flew to Hillsborough to view the new house. It combined the most deplorable characteristics of the last ten we had seen. To begin with it was dark, dank, absurdly proportioned and totally ill-suited to our needs. As I approached it the acacias, which lined the driveway, occasioned an immediate allergic attack that made me beat a hasty retreat. Plucking up my courage, I covered my face with a handkerchief and finally made it through the front entrance. When I opened the door to the first closet, I was greeted by a swarm of termites...Bridget Brennan, who had accompanied me, took one look at the stairs leading down into her quarters and burst into tears.
> (My Life with Bing, page 273)

Bing's enthusiasm for the property rapidly waned as well and in December 1965, they moved to the house at 1200 Jackling, Hillsborough where Kathryn still lives today.

In June, we learned that actors Megan Fox and Brian Austin Green had agreed to purchase another one of Bing's former homes for $3.35 million. The property was described as a "6,710 square-foot four-bedroom, six-bathroom home in Toluca Lake, California that was the late crooner's original Carriage House." The house had been re-modeled in 2008. Bing originally owned a home in Foreman Street, Toluca Lake and then he had one built on Camarillo Street in the same area and it may well be that the carriage house was in the grounds of the latter.

Put Bing on the map

This was the heading to a letter published by the Spokesman Review in Spokane on May 3. The letter was from Dale Roloff of Spokane who said:

> "With Bloomsday now and Hoopfest next month putting Spokane on the map, visitors come from all over and wonder why there are no public monuments to Spokane's most famous citizen, Bing Crosby. Tacoma (his May 3 birthplace) also claims him as a favorite son, but from toddler age Spokane was his real home.
>
> We have Crosby's home and a statue, both on the Gonzaga University campus, and the Bing Theater, but there are no city-owned monuments in his honor.
>
> Right now, the city has two short streets in the Indian Trail neighborhood, Bing Court and Crosby Court. Ironically, both are downwind from the old city dump, hardly a fitting remembrance. Why not rename the street or place plaques on portions of the street on which he lived, Sharp Avenue?
>
> Between Washington Street and Mission Avenue, there are breaks at both ends, and such a 12-block long area would be ideal for an avenue or road. Remember his "Road To ..." movies?
>
> It's high time we showed our pride in Bing Crosby and put him on the map, literally."

Well said, Dale. Mind you, Spokane did celebrate Bing's birthday with free birthday cake served in front of the Bing Crosby statue on the Gonzaga campus on Friday, May 2nd from 11am to 1pm. Bing would have been 111 on May 3rd.

"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime"

Back in April it was announced that the recordings of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" by Bing and by Rudy Vallee were to be inducted into the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry.

By way of background, the United States National Recording Preservation Board selects recorded sounds for preservation in the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry. The National Recording Registry was initiated to maintain and preserve "sound recordings that are culturally, historically or aesthetically significant"; to be eligible, recordings must be at least ten years old.

Every year, the Librarian of Congress, with advice from the Library's National Recording Preservation Board, selects 25 recordings that are at least 10 years old; the best existing versions of each are housed in the Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Va.

"These recordings represent an important part of America's culture and history," Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said. "As technology continually changes and formats become obsolete, we must ensure

that our nation's aural legacy is protected. The National Recording Registry is at the core of this effort."

Amongst the items selected this year are "Cathy's Clown," from The Everly Brothers, Creedence Clearwater Revival's antiwar anthem "Fortunate Son" and *Heart Like a Wheel*, from Linda Ronstadt. Albums by U2 (*The Joshua Tree*), Isaac Hayes (*Theme From Shaft*) and Art Blakey (*A Night at Birdland*) and music from Celia Cruz, Elmore James, Buck Owens, The Louvin Brothers, Louis Jordan, Jeff Buckley and of course Bing.

The selections bring the number of recordings in the registry to 400, a fraction of the Library's vast recorded sound collection of more than 3.5 million items.

This is what was said about the entry which is of most interest to us.

"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" (singles) – Bing Crosby; Rudy Vallee (both 1932) Composed by Jay Gorney and E.Y. "Yip" Harburg, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" was the show-stopping number of the 1932, Depression-era musical ***American Revue***. The minor-key melody, according to Gorney, was inspired by a Yiddish lullaby. The song's lyrics underscored the irony of the Depression-era American working class people who had once built railroads and fought wars only to find themselves now waiting in bread lines. With its bittersweet melody and bold, unsentimental lyrics, this arresting anthem to America's "forgotten man" became a major hit. Recordings by Crosby and Vallee—both issued the same year—were best-sellers and emphasized the song's strengths in different ways. Crosby's nuanced baritone played to the song's drama; his use of rubato during the verse was especially effective. On the other hand, Vallee's light tenor is more emotionally removed and allows the song to stand more on its own merits.

Taking a quick look through the 400 recordings already on the Register, there appears to be only one other by Bing - - his 1942 version of "White Christmas".

Bing statue to be erected in Ireland

We were delighted to read the following in the *Irish Examiner* newspaper on June 9th.

Sculptures of Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Marconi, and a man who was involved in one of the greatest escapes in Irish history are to be unveiled in part of West Cork in a drive to improve tourism.

Goleen and District Community Council has applied for planning permission to Cork County Council for the erection of the sculptures of the famous four who all had major connections with the area.

GDCC chairman Michael Collins said it is hoped to have all the sculptures unveiled within a year and a special an invitation will be extended to Crosby's nephew, Howard, to attend the unveiling event.

Crosby's ancestors hailed from the Lowertown area and a sculpture of him singing will be placed beside the local church.

Astaire visited the same area on a number of occasions before he died in 1987. The star was a frequent visitor to Castlepoint, Schull, where his daughter Ava McKenzie had a house for many years.

The third sculpture will be of Guglielmo Marconi, who developed the first effective system of radio communication with wireless telegraphy. In 1901, the Italian-born Marconi sent wireless signals across the Atlantic Ocean for the first time from a base at Brow Head, Crookhaven. A sculpture of him seated and listening to signals will be erected there.

Finally there will also be a sculpture dedicated to the Goleen-born Fenian Michael Harrington who, together with other Fenians, was deported to Australia by the British.

Together with five other Fenians, Harrington daringly broke out of Freemantle jail in Western Australia and escaped to America after receiving life sentences for their political activities.

Mr Collins said local community organisations would fund the projects, but added that a lot of the work would be done voluntarily.

Sean O'Riordan

Among My Souvenirs...Recent Bing Acquisitions and Contacts

Greg Van Beek has been busy picking up some rare Bing items.

To Rudy from Bing

Among the contacts I recently made was with a memorabilia dealer who had acquired a number of records and transcription discs from the Rudy Vallee estate. Rudy passed away in 1986. To my great surprise, the records included several of Bing's blue-label Decca 78 rpm records that belonged to Rudy. But these weren't just ordinary store bought records...these were personally autographed by Bing to Rudy Vallee! There were 4 signed records, recorded between 1936 and 1938. The titles include:

#2001 Mexicali Rose / Silver on the Sage (signed on this side)

#1933 I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams / A Blues Serenade (signed on this side)

#870 Empty Saddles (signed on this side) / Roundup Lullaby

#1201 The One Rose (signed on this side) / Sentimental and Melancholy

A deal was quickly reached and I am now the proud owner of these records that were in the hands of both Bing Crosby and Rudy Vallee!

A possible scenario on how Rudy obtained these records may be that Rudy sought out copies of the records and Bing happily obliged in sending him signed copies. I can't imagine Bing would've just sent out unsolicited signed copies of his records to someone many considered to be his one-time rival; the man who, years earlier, purportedly predicted that Bing would one day "de-throne" him. Perhaps Rudy wanted to learn the songs to perform them on his radio show? We may never know for certain.

A Major Award for Bing

Bing was honored on a pre-recorded awards show that aired on NBC-TV on June 14, 1976 called the "Entertainment Hall of Fame" awards. Sammy Cahn and Bob Hope took part in the festivities, with Tony Bennett singing a medley of Bing's hits. Bing made a short "Thank You" speech at the close as he was presented with a beautiful square-shaped Lucite award with a bronze plate attached on a wooden base by Tony Bennett, which inducted him into the Entertainment Hall of Fame. The award reads:

"HONORING CREATORS AND PERFORMERS

OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

NOT FOR WHAT THEY LAST DID.

BUT FOR WHAT THEY DID THAT WILL LAST."

TO

BING CROSBY

1976

Unfortunately that is all that is known about the show. It has not been seen since it originally aired. I later found out that the shows were a series of specials or a short lived weekly series produced by Rothman and Wohl.

In 1982, the award Bing was presented that evening six years prior was among the items from the Bing Crosby Estate that were auctioned by Butterfield's in San Francisco. It was lot number 1599, and one of the few items pictured in the auction program. According to the prices penciled in my copy of the program by someone who attended the auction, this award sold for $475. Earlier this year, it turned up on eBay, of all places, where, once again it was auctioned off. I, recognizing its significance, quickly made a bid…which turned out to be the only bid. I purchased it for under $100 and it now holds a special place of prominence amongst my collection. If anyone has a copy of the EHOF show, or knows who may have one, I would be most grateful to be able to see Bing being presented with this actual award.

Bing's Last Professional Work in the United States?

There are always a vast array of publicity photos, movie stills, and press photos of Bing that turn up for auction on a regular basis on eBay. This shot caught my eye, as it was used in conjunction with UPI's coverage of Bing's passing. Bing is seen leaning against a 1948 Tele-Tone model 149 TV set with a seven-inch screen. The caption indicates that Bing is "pictured during the filming a TV commercial here (in San Francisco) on 8/25/77".

Later I found a few behind-the-scenes color slides taken during the filming of this commercial, including a color version of this news photo. The slides were stamped "8/77", indicating August of 1977. In consulting with Malcolm, we've determined that the August 25th date cannot be correct, as Bing landed in Oslo, Norway that day. But I would imagine this commercial was filmed sometime after the Concord, CA concert on August 16, and his departure for London on the 23rd (after which he flew on to Norway on the 25th). Bing left the US for the last time on August 23, 1977 never again to return among the living. As such, this long-lost TV commercial, for an unknown cause or promotion, may very well be the last professional work Bing Crosby performed in the United States. It may have been a local spot that aired only in the Bay area. If anyone remembers this commercial and what it concerned, both Malcolm and I would be most interested in learning more about it.

Over a Bottle of Wine

Sometimes connections to Bing happen in the most unlikely places. I have a number of antique radio collector and restorer friends who post videos of their projects on YouTube. Some are how-to videos, while others are just showing off their collections. I was persuaded by some of them to post videos of some of my projects and completed restorations as well, and it's been a fun way to interact with like-minded people. One of the appeals of the antique radios I restore is the history behind them, and thinking of all of the shows, and songs, and news that were heard on these sets when they were new and in constant use during the 30's and 40's. Some collectors use small home AM transmitters to be able to "broadcast" original programming through the tuner of their vintage sets, which really adds to their nostalgic effect. I have such a transmitter myself. Just a cheap plastic child's toy, but it works surprisingly well, "broadcasting" at 1600 on the dial.

Wanting to hear some Crosby music on my 1948 Philco, I chose an aircheck of Bing performing a somewhat obscure but catchy song called "Over a Bottle of Wine". I posted a video of a bit of it playing on the radio, just for the benefit of my radio friends. Well, lo and behold, someone named Ken Shapiro left a comment under the video that said, "I never knew this existed until now. My father wrote this song with Sam Stept." Incredible! So I contacted Ken, via the e-mail provided with his comment, and we began messaging back and forth. Upon offering Ken a better quality copy of the song, he wrote me:

> "I would love a better quality performance of "Over a Bottle of Wine". I doubt whether my dad ever knew Bing had sang it. My dad passed away twenty years ago. He was one of Bob Hope's writers for more than thirty five years. Our good family friend, Herb Polesie was one of Bing's closest friends and involved in many of Bing's projects. Herb's wife Midge is the one who came up with the phrase "Where the Turf Meets the Surf" Down at Old Del Mar. Midge was Dixie's best friend. Bing's guitarist, Perry Botkin lived on our street in Sherman Oaks. I

had the pleasure of producing a tribute to Bing on the very first *American Music Awards* in 1974, and more recently spent some time with Mary and Kathryn at Delores Hope's after funeral gathering at the Hope house. Bing was the greatest."

Bing performed the song three times on radio in 1951, twice on his own show for Chesterfield (November 21st and December 5th) and again when he was the guest star on Bob Hope's show on December 25th. Bing must've been fond of the song to perform it so often in such a short span of time, or perhaps Bob Hope persuaded him to feature it on the Chesterfield shows for the benefit of Hope's writer (and the songwriter) Dan Shapiro. Whatever the case, it's a great shame Bing never made a commercial recording of it.

Murdo MacKenzie Collection

The name Murdo MacKenzie is well known among listeners to Bing Crosby's radio shows. Beginning in the early to mid-1940's, when he became involved on the production side, (primarily as director), right up through the conclusion of the Crosby-Clooney Show in 1962, Murdo was a part of Bing's radio shows. He passed away in 1999, and his vast collection of transcription discs has been distributed amongst his surviving family. Recently I was in touch with Murdo's grandson Cody MacKenzie, with whom I exchanged a few messages back and forth via an eBay listing he had for one such disc. He mentioned that his Grandmother was Trudy Erwin (whose real name was Virginia Lee Mackenzie), whom we know sang often with Bing. She passed away in 2000. Cody said he had "some old stuff ... old broadcasts that no one I think even knows about" that he was looking to sell. Well this piqued my interest, and I inquired for more details. He mentioned finding transcription discs from early Kraft Music Hall broadcasts with Bing in December of 1935 and January of 1936, among other records, which are exceedingly rare. I had been negotiating with him to try to purchase what he wishes to dispose of, but ultimately we could not come to terms. Not wanting to let such a golden opportunity pass for a Crosby aficionado to acquire some rare broadcast transcriptions that have not been heard since their initial airing, I sought out Malcolm's assistance and advice. He suggested John Newton may be just the person to recognize their significance and importance in Bing's early broadcast career, and to properly preserve them. I'll let John pick up the rest of the fascinating story about this major find.

Greg Van Beek

Kraft Broadcasts 1935-1936

John Newton continues with the story...

I was initially surprised as I began to read Malcolm's email message, along with Greg's accompanying summary of a number of broadcast discs he had been negotiating to obtain. As I read further, and quickly recognized the significance of the dates of the broadcasts involved, my eyebrows raised and my interest became much more intense.

Could it be true? Did some of this material actually still exist? And, if so, how could it be obtained and in what form?

I read of Greg's efforts and communications, and, in reading between the lines, could sense his frustration at not being able to consummate the acquisition, balanced by his ready willingness to pass along what information he had in a further effort to prevent a possible opportunity from passing by and disappearing back into the mists of time.

So, the thread of information was picked up. I began to feel as though I was an archeologist who had been handed a partial map, with tales of treasures waiting to be re-discovered. I also recognized that the thread of contact was, in itself, time sensitive, and that I would need to move quickly and establish unsolicited communication, gain some rapport, learn what I could, and attempt to obtain the possible treasures.

I sent a first tentative note, and received a timely reply. My correspondent advised (as I had previously known from Greg's forwarded information) that he was the grandson of Murdo MacKenzie, a radio executive who had worked with Bing Crosby. He also mentioned, in ongoing notes, passed back and forth, that his grandmother was Trudy Erwin, who had sung with Bing on many broadcasts. We began to focus on the "radio broadcast records", my own focus of which were in the records that might be dated in late 1935 and early 1936. Yes, came back another note, he had broadcast records dated from December, 1935 and January, 1936. And, yes, he would be open to discussing the sale of the records.

There was a slight reversal and apprehension when a more detailed description of the records was forthcoming. I was advised that the records were "glass based" and were exceedingly fragile. I was also sent a photo of one of the record labels, and the record was, indeed, housed in a paper sleeve with bold red printing stating "Glass Base - Handle With Care". This caused some pause on my part, since I knew that glass based discs were not introduced for use until 1942-1943, when the usual metal base materials were considered priorities for war efforts. Could these records be war-time copies of earlier discs, or what did this mean?

The record labels, however, gave a much better clue as to the provenance of the broadcast records. I recognized that within my collection I had other privately made off-the-air recordings, made by the very same recording company, for another stage and radio performer during 1936 and 1937, and those records had been specifically recorded for the artist himself. At this point I began to formulate my own theory as to the

provenance of the records, and why they managed to survive through the decades since their initial recording. More about this later.

My next questions involved the number of discs involved for each date supplied to me. Some dates corresponded exactly to what I might have expected, but some of the records were dated a day *before* the broadcasts had taken place.

Bing on an early Kraft show.

Could these be rehearsal recordings? More questions, and the number of records seemed to vary in some cases from the original listings, then were corrected again. Then came the negotiations on price. This matter went back and forth, and was finally settled… until the matter of shipping arose. The owner was convinced that these were "glass based" discs, as mentioned previously, and was extremely hesitant to ship the records with anything less than professional packing and shipping. I had already convinced myself that such cautions were not necessary, but thought better of upsetting the price agreement over the minor detail of shipping costs. I quickly agreed to accept whatever shipping costs were deemed necessary, and the agreement was finalized.

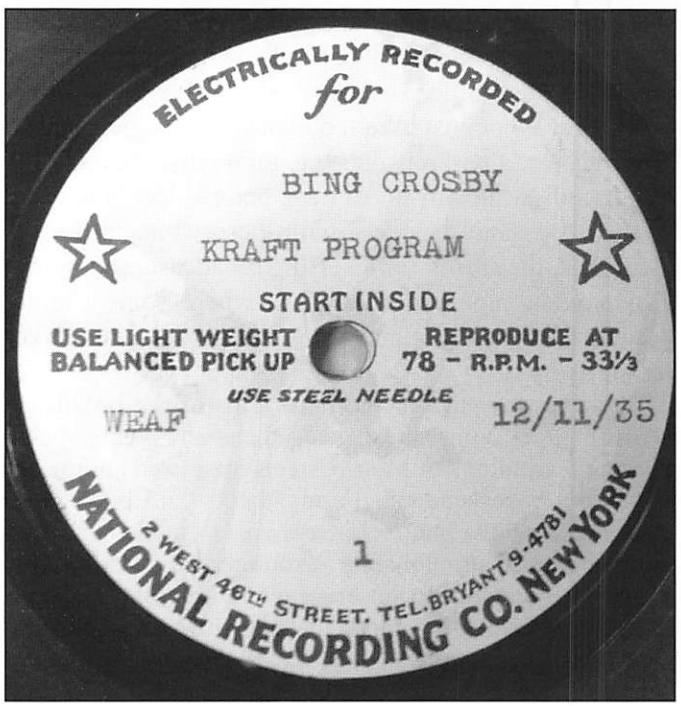
I then examined my own "record fund", some monies I usually keep set aside in case the need for purchases might arise. Fortunately, in this case, my record acquisitions of late had been minimal, so the necessary funds were at hand. The pre-arranged payment and sale method allowed on-line payment and was quickly forwarded and acknowledged. Next came the agony of waiting, and more waiting. Feeling that some true treasures were on their way to me only increased the anxiety.

Finally, the package arrived. Both my wife and I were taken aback by the size of the box that was used for shipping the records to me. It was, by far, the largest box of records that had ever been delivered to me in over 45+ years of record collecting! Upon opening the huge box, I quickly noted that each and every record had been individually wrapped within its own "bubble wrap" protection, and groups of these individual wrappings had been placed within larger protective wrappings, all to fully ensure the safe arrival of the "glass base" records. More of these smaller packages awaited unwrapping. Upon opening the very first of these wrappings, I instantly realized that the extreme caution had been unnecessary, and what I was holding was a professional studio direct line recording of radio broadcast material dating from 1935-1936, and not any later copy or anything else. All the rest were, of course, the same; and, as it turned out, there were actually more records than had originally been discussed.

The records were sorted into groups, based on the dates that had been type-written on the labels around 78 years ago. There were two discs for this date, and three discs for that. Two other dates had six discs each. And all of the records were recorded on both sides. An examination of the records disclosed that just about all of them were in reasonably good condition. Some appeared to have minor damage, the type that often resulted from being played with steel needles, long ago, but the records generally looked to be in good order. The recordings had all been made at 78rpm, with the recordings on each side beginning at the innermost groove and recorded outward toward the edge of the record. While this may seem backward to our thinking, it was a fairly common practice to record in this manner for non-commercial purposes. (Early film discs, containing the synchronous soundtracks for early sound films, had been recorded in this same manner, beginning as early as 1926).

With the sorting and examining quickly done, the listening had to begin without any further delay. Based on the dates on the records, I started with the earliest dates. While we've now all heard the broadcast contents of the December 5, 1935 broadcast, I played it again, nevertheless. One revelation came, however, and that was that Bing never sang "Without a Word of Warning" on that program, despite news and directory reports. Also, as differing from my original West Coast air-check of that program, the complete verse for "Red Sails in the Sunset" is intact on these newly re-discovered records.

For the first four Bing Crosby appearances on what was still, at the time, Paul Whiteman's program, it turned out that these records contained only the Bing Crosby portions of the programs, with small bits of Whiteman's introductions or sign-offs before or after Bing's segments. Bing appeared twice during each of these broadcasts, the first containing a Crosby medley, and the second segment containing additional songs. During the four Whiteman-to-Crosby introductory programs, the Whiteman portions of the program originated in New York, broadcast from WEAF, the flagship station of the NBC red network. During these four broadcasts, the Crosby segments were "cut in" from station KFI in Hollywood. The latter two dates of the group, however, were different. These broadcasts originated from Hollywood and were picked up by the rest of the network through local broadcasting stations. The discs for the Kraft Programs of January 2, 1936 and January 9, 1936, Bing's first two Kraft programs of his own, each appeared on six two-sided records. Twelve parts each, meaning that a complete recording of each hour-long program had somehow miraculously survived. All of the records had been recorded through a direct line from New York's station WEAF. Wow!



Continuing an exhausting but wondrous listening session, I soon discovered that the contents of these programs closely mirrored the printed contents that appear within Lionel Pairpoint's wonderful radio directory of Bing's broadcast work. A few additions, corrections, or subtractions might be in order, but Lionel's fine work, developed from newspaper and print reports, was very close to the mark. Actual *listening*, however, proved revelatory. I'm certain that many Crosby fans and collectors have read Lionel's directory over the years, and said to themselves how much they might enjoy hearing Bing sing this or that song, as he had done those long years ago. Here were some of those dreams, finally coming true after the silence of so many years.

The broadcast of December 12, 1935, contained the medley and additional songs that were listed in the Pairpoint directory, but hearing Bing sing the songs in that glorious 1935 voice was better than might have been expected. As was Bing's style for these medleys, they were arranged with musical segues, and were very appealing. Especially interesting, during his second segment on the program, was Bing's jazzy approach to "After You've Gone", a style heard occasionally on more of these broadcasts as my listening progressed.

On the December 19, 1935 broadcast, the medley again appeared as had been listed in print, including "I'm Yours", which Bing never recorded His presentations of "From Monday On" and "Dinah" again had his "jazzy" interpretations, and were a true delight to hear. But, at least to me, the outstanding song here was Bing's splendid performance of "Alone". This song was very popular that the time, having been introduced by Allan Jones in the Marx Bros. film "A Night at the Opera". It hadn't made any huge personal impact on me, however, although I'd always regarded it as a rather nice song. - And then I heard *Bing* sing it. Bing's superlative rendition of "Alone" is one of those that I usually term a "throw-away" song, a song that he performed just one single time, and that was it. Many performers would give little time or effort on such "filler" songs, songs that were popular at the time, but probably wouldn't be repeated or become any part of their usual repertoire. One time, and one time only, but Bing's natural talent took over and made it something that any Crosby fan would want to hear again, and again, and again. This broadcast also contained one difference from what appeared in the directory. "You Are My Lucky Star" was not performed, but was replaced by "Red Sails in the

Sunset", which Bing advised was requested again after his rendition appeared two weeks earlier.

Bing's next, and last, appearance on a transitional Whiteman broadcast, as the reins of the program were being handed over to him, came as somewhat of a surprise. On this December 26, 1935 broadcast, I knew, of course, that Bing was supposed to have sung the songs "Thanks a Million" and "You Are My Lucky Star", and I was expecting these. What I first heard, however, when I began to play the records of this broadcast, was the voice of Paul Whiteman, announcing, ".. to Hollywood, where we pick up Bing Crosby, singing with Jimmy Dorsey's orchestra. Tonight Bing is presenting some of the songs from his new picture *Anything Goes*. We're waiting for you, Bing."... This is followed, seamlessly, by Jimmy Dorsey's orchestra beginning the opening strains of "Sailor Beware", and Bing joins right in. Bing also sings "Moonburn" and "My Heart and I" (also within this segment, Jimmy Dorsey's female vocalist, Kay Weber, sings "I Get a Kick Out of You" and the Dorsey Trio sings the title song from the film). In Bing's second segment he sings "Thanks a Million", performed with his own lyrics, giving many thanks to Paul Whiteman for his own career successes and advice that Whiteman had supplied. Bing then sang "You Are My Lucky Star", but not in a straight-singing manner, more as a somewhat dialect-type performance.

The very first of Bing's own Kraft Music Hall broadcasts came next, the broadcast of January 2, 1936, beginning with Don Wilson, announcing. Bing is introduced and goes right into his first song, "Eeny Meeny Miney Mo". I had had a vague remembrance of this Johnny Mercer song, but somehow Bing's performance seemed different. I later checked a reference of "the *complete* lyrics" of Johnny Mercer, and noted that some of the lyrics Bing sang on this broadcast were nowhere to be found. Bing's singing of the bridge section was: "Armstrong scats it, Mr. Waller fats it, Woollcott chats it, even Fred Astaire top hats it".. Were these special lyrics Bing's own? Or something Mr. Mercer supplied? Regardless, it's a delight to hear. And, during the instrumental section of the song, the Dorsey Trio sings "Even Mr. Crosby bings it." (this *was* among Mercer's original lyrics). There were of course guests, and much else, within this full hour broadcast. I must confess, however, that I was impatient to hear more of Bing's singing, so I began to skip over segments of the broadcast that contained little or no Bing singing, looking for the songs I had waited so many years to hear. I finally received my true reward, when Bing sang an old standard, "I'll See You in My Dreams". This was Bing at his best. It's another of those "throw-away" songs, in that he never sang it again on any Kraft program, but Bing nevertheless gave it his all. It is performed in a very slow and dreamy ballad style, with that glorious voice trembling beautifully through each and every note. It simply couldn't be better. Bing also sang "Boots and Saddle" again, another wonderful rendition. It later occurred to me that all three of Bing's songs were quite different from one another, both in type and performance, and it gave a clear indication of just how very talented this Crosby fellow happened to be. Within one live broadcast, he easily transitioned from jazz singer, to ballad singer, to a western song that no cowboy could ever equal.

The next program, the last of the group, was Bing's KMH broadcast of January 9, 1936. And, once again, I confess my impatience in skipping through much of the program, looking for Bing's vocals. The recording of the program begins hesitatingly (due to the recording technician), with very low sound that builds into Bing singing "A Little Bit Independent". The recording strengthens for the other songs. One song, "I Found a Dream", just happened to be from a film that featured Miss Dixie Lee, and we're more familiar with the remaining songs, "Some of These Days" and "With All My Heart", but they still come across strong and clear.

After two long listening sessions, I had finally heard so much of what had only recently been considered "lost" performances. Even as a Bing fan and collector of so many years, I was still stunned after hearing these wonderful performances that had been hidden away, like a pharaoh's tomb, for so many years, just waiting to be unearthed. What next? Well, obviously, some plans must be made. And I will rely on some future discussions with my friends Malcolm and Greg, before deciding what further steps may be taken with these wonders. In the meantime, the search for lost Bing broadcasts continues. Can anyone supply a clue as to where some Cremo programs might be hidden away, just awaiting a similar re-discovery?

Oh, yes, my theory on the origins of the broadcast recordings... While these had, for many years, been within the holdings of Murdo MacKenzie, and later were owned by a descendant, it's my theory and belief that these recordings had originally been made for and belonged to Bing himself. Although Mr. MacKenzie later became a significant presence in a number of later Crosby programs, his more in-depth involvement with Bing did not occur until years after these particular broadcasts. At the time of these broadcasts, Murdo MacKenzie was a young 22-year-old sound technician. He *was* involved with the technical side of the earlier four programs, lending his technical expertise to the transitioning aspect between New York and Hollywood. But the actual production and directorial work was handled by the advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, which had also handled the earlier Whiteman broadcasts for the Kraft company. The labels on the records, and even the record sleeves, give further clues. Each label states that the recording was made FOR Bing Crosby, and it is my belief that they were made at Bing's own request, or on his behalf by J. Walter Thompson. This would fit in with other similar discs I own that belonged to another performer of that period. Most of the records

were still housed within their original plain sleeves, somewhat brittle and some torn. But two of them were within sleeves marked "Glass Base...", and these sleeves would not have been manufactured until 1942 or 1943, a number of years after the recordings were made. By this time, Murdo MacKenzie had become more involved in Bing's broadcast programs, and Mr. MacKenzie's wife, Trudy Erwin, was amongst the performers that regularly appeared on Bing's programs. I think that it was during this later time period that, for whatever reason, Bing gave the records to Murdo MacKenzie and two of the records were slipped into newer replacement sleeves (with the Glass Base warning). This timing of such a gift would also be relevant, since early 1943 produced the fire that destroyed much of Bing's personal collection of recordings and other career memorabilia. Anyway, for whatever reason, these recordings were apparently destined to survive and, ultimately, be re-discovered.

John Newton ***Newtonjj2@aol.com***

(Editor: Words fail me! I'm astonished!! How amazing that these recordings have turned up. John will be discussing his plans for the recordings with Greg and me in the coming weeks. I know that all members will want to hear these rare recordings.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

John Bassett, "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

"Alternate Bing Crosby – Vol. 2". Issued as a companion volume to Colin Pugh's invaluable 1988 publication (still available from the ICC – see below), this 64-page edition continues the story by examining every alternate take discovered since that first edition. In total, 119 titles are dealt with in this A4 size publication, currently available at £7.50 (including postage). All remittances in £ sterling should be made payable to John Bassett and sent to him at the address above. (Overseas costs available upon request).

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD. Last year, Festival Films re-released "On the Road with Bing and Bob" with 3 added films and they also issued a DVD called "Golf Mania".

John C. Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD, UK (email: carson1812@blueyonder.co.uk)

BING—A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES has emerged as a fully fledged DVD—with the considerable plus of the four part '+CELLULOID CENTURY' featuring 400 vintage movie posters from the 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's. £10.00 including p. & p. Please note, UK orders only. Order direct from John, please.

McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640, USA (Orders only Tel: 800-253-2187, email: info@mcfarlandpub.com)

Members will recall that Ken Crossland and your Editor wrote an award-winning book called **"Perry Como-A Biography and Complete Career Record"** a year or two back. The book is now available as a softcover and as an ebook. Cost $25. Print ISBN: 978-0-7864-7166-9, Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4766-0024-6. The book has 73 photos, discography, bibliography, index. 310pp. softcover (7 x 10). A Google search should find it easily but if not go to: www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-7166-9

Oxford University Press reminds us that:

Late Life Jazz: The Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney by Ken Crossland and Malcolm Macfarlane continues to be available through all good bookshops and from Amazon, or direct from Oxford University Press at: http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199798575.do

Prices: $23.96 (Amazon USA), $26.84 (Amazon USA – Kindle), Can$29.95, £18.99 (UK), £17.09 (UK - Kindle)

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 email: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing and other easy listening artists' CDs, please contact Ray.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society
Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)
The Society has been running since 1977 having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights.
The film night for April featured *Birth of the Blues* and *Going Hollywood*. In June, the film was *Road to Morocco* along with *Best Foot Forward* (1943) starring Lucille Ball. Future film nights are planned for August 19, October 21 and December 9. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com
This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains a mass of information plus some excellent audio and video vaults which contain much rare material.

Bing Crosby on Facebook
This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:
www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326
Daily entries are made and the number of people who have "liked" the site has now risen to over 250,000

Bing Crosby on Twitter
See www.twitter.com/Bingconstantly for this site which appeared last year and which has lots of useful tweets. It has grown to 4319 followers now.
@Bing_Crosby is still the place to go for Bing Crosby Inc. There are 2224 followers as we go to press.

YouTube
There are many Bing items on YouTube. Bing Crosby Enterprises has its own channel at YouTube with many Bing videos in evidence. Go to:
http://www.youtube.com/user/BingCrosbyEnterprise

BING magazine
This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Lionel Pairpoint's marvellous radio book, Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can be accessed. Your editor's book "Bing Crosby – Day by Day" is on the site too and it has had many additions made to it in recent months, including a good number of the letters written by Bing over the years. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography
Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:
http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World
This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog
ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

The Bing Crosby News Archive
David Lobosco runs this blog which has news and many stories about Bing at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

Tony Meade's blog
Tony has an interesting and varied site at http://bingsphotos.blogspot.co.uk/

John Marshall's "The Written Word"
John's excellent PowerPoint presentations "A Night At The Movies" and "The Written Word" can now be found by typing *internet archive john c marshall bing-the written word* into your search engine.

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698, email: intuneinternational@talktalk.net)
Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent monthly periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, website: www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)
King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. email: suegokgor@aol.com.
Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (email: JWWehrman@aol.com - website: www.jolson.org)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.flias.com/)
A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).
A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European

membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Ken Barnes, who made those great albums with Bing in the 70s, is the Honorary President.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, c/o Penny Probert, 15 Bessels Way, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2QG, UK (email: pat_woor@yahoo.co.uk)

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £8.50 (UK), 10 Euros (Europe) and $20 (USA). A quarterly newsletter of 12-14 pages is issued.

Have you seen

Memory Lane

the acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music? Although the emphasis is on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, Memory Lane also covers the American bands, jazz, variety, etc. Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist is regularly featured.

Memory Lane is quality printed, fully illustrated and nicely presented with articles, CD reviews, Readers Letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A "must" for 78 RPM collectors.

Memory Lane also issues CDs mainly of British dance bands and vocalists, DVDs, runs guided walks in central London identifying the locations where the bands used to play, etc. and hosts nostalgic events in London.

Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £15 - UK, £20 - overseas.) Please send cheque payable to "Memory Lane" to

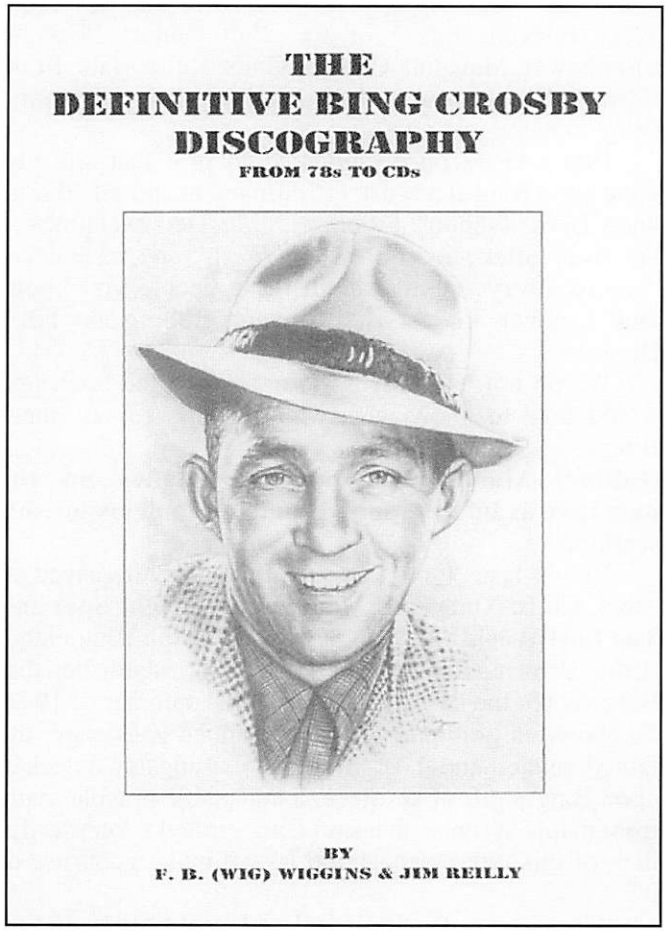
Memory Lane, P O Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.

Or visit our web site - www.memorylane.org.uk where you can pay on-line.

Books 'n' Bing

1. The Definitive Bing Crosby Discography – From 78s to CDs, by F. B. (Wig) Wiggins and Jim Reilly

Since the well-received discography ***"Bing Crosby's Commercial Recordings From 78s to CDs"*** was published by Wig Wiggins in 2001, collectors have continued to ask if they might still obtain copies. Unfortunately, it has been out of print for some time. However, because there have been so many changes and additions to Bing's recording legacy over the past decade, especially on compact disc, Wig and Jim Reilly have prepared an extensively revised edition which is now ready for publication. Their new discography (front cover as below) will be issued in a limited edition for sale to Club Crosby members who pre-order in a timely manner. Please see the enclosed flyer for complete ordering information. You should place your order as soon as possible to ensure receiving a copy of this highly recommended discography.



2. My Place at the Table

By John Derr, Hardcover, 360 pages. Published in 2010 by Old Sport Publishing; ISBN-10: 069200985X ISBN-13: 978-0692009857. $26.95

Ron Field drew our attention to this book by sports journalist John Derr. As a reporter – print, radio, television and personal appearances – Derr created essays bringing us face to face with heroes of the last 80 years. One of them was Bing and a photo of Derr with El Bingo is on the front cover of the book. Derr interviewed Hall of Famers from almost every sport.

John Derr with Bing.

Derr – who attended 69 Masters as a journalist or patron and was instrumental in helping get the tournament televised on CBS – knew or met just about every relevant figure of the 20th century: Dwight Eisenhower, Mahatma Ghandi, Grace Kelly, Babe Ruth, Edward R. Murrow, Albert Einstein, Bob Hope and Bing, to name just a few.

Derr's sister once confessed to him that she had gone up to Bing at a Masters Tournament and asked if he knew Derr. "Fibbing? Fibbing!!" John Derr exclaimed to his sister after she confessed. "Well," she responded, "you're always talking about these people you know, and I never knew if you were fibbing or not." He wasn't.

We do not have access to a copy of the book and would love to know what Mr. Derr has to say about Bing.

(Editor: Martin McQuade now takes up the narrative as he has spotted some more items for this section.)

Bing's taste for a certain liqueur is referenced in **Stork Club: America's Most Famous Night Spot and The Lost World Of Café Society** by Ralph Blumenthal (Little Brown and Co.; 2000) The book establishes that Bing visited the swank club during the summer of 1942. To show his gratitude for his continued patronage, the fabled owner and host Sherman Billingsley lavished upon Bing a gift of sortilege, a delectable potable made from maple syrup. A thankful Bing replied, "Very useful item of this rare essence, and I shall make good use of it."

A passage in **Doris Day: The Untold Story of The Girl Next Door** by David Kaufman (Macmillan; 2008) contains this intriguing passage. "An internal memo dated March 27, 1956 and sent to Jack Warner indicates that Bing Crosby was under consideration as her co-star in *Pajama Game*, but the 53 year old crooner knocked himself out of the running by demanding $200,000 against 5% of the gross, in addition to 25% of the gross for his company." That was certainly a lot of "seven and a half cents" in the mid-fifties. Mr. Kaufman states that Howard Keel was also in contention for the part that eventually went to John Raitt. The book contains a priceless quote attributed to Bing in reaction to the tumultuous recording industry of the mid-fifties. "Pop music in the USA is one of the few things in the 20th century that has made giant strides in reverse."

Mad as Hell: The Making of Network And The Fateful Vision of The Angriest Man In Movies by David Itzkoff (Times Book: 2014) gives a glimpse into the friendship between William Holden and Bing. "By the 1970"s [Holden] could be most often found at his estate in Palm Springs, or at the Mount Kenya Safari Club, the hunting lodge and rare-animal preserve he helped establish on 1,200 acres of ranch land near Nairobi (at a cost of $750,000) where he vacationed and played host to the likes of Bing Crosby and Lyndon B. Johnson."

Martin McQuade

Lead Us On Into "Temptation"

Martin McQuade continues with an interesting potpourri.

On June 14 this reporter had the pleasure to return to the Jazz Age Lawn Party held on Governors' Island in New York Harbor and hosted by Michael Arenella, whose Dreamland Orchestra delivers those who are present into the gilded past. This spring's event was a particular delight for a Crosby fan. Gregory Moore, winner of the prestigious Dorothy Loudon Award for cabaret artists, performed an electrifying homage to Bing via his rendition of "Temptation." This was presented in a deluxe "Dreamland Follies" production number, replete with overtones of another *Going Hollywood* song, "Beautiful Girl." Gregory is a direct descendent of the legendary Metropolitan Opera soprano Grace Moore. Following in her footsteps, Gregory also performed for many years with The Met. As the program states, he then switched teams, "becoming a 1930's influenced crooner in the style of Russ Columbo, Bing Crosby and other great male singers of the era." Gregory shared how hard it is for him to resist "Temptation."

In this, our fifth season with Michael Arenella & his Dreamland Orchestra at the Governors Island Jazz Age Lawn Party, my ten lovely chorines and I presented three musical "production numbers"—heavily inspired by rather late issue Ziegfeld Follies, think around 1931. The entire event is skewed to right around that year, with perhaps five years in either direction. The name of our production, in fact, is "The Dreamland Follies". Each season, we've presented a new number, along with the previous ones we've done. It is, perhaps, the most difficult decision that we have to make each season—finding our next number!

This summer, we presented the terrific and tempestuous, "Temptation," of course introduced by Bing Crosby in the MGM film, Going Hollywood—a moody and exceedingly torrid number which implies that Bing's character is, in fact, intoxicated with absinthe (and Fifi D'Orsay, too!). This song appears in many, many other films as well, nearly all of which were made by MGM (perhaps most notably, Singin' in the Rain). With just one or two bars of music, the listener is instantly transported to 1933, with the decidedly tango-inflected beat pulsating from start to finish. It's not an easy song to sing, either. I'd guess it's right up there with Bing's other hit, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" as far as a song requiring a singer with real "chops" to pull it off goes. It starts low and small and ends high and large Naturally, Bing set the bar very high on his studio recording of this number. It would certainly be in the "Top Five" of Bing's most range-y and difficult songs, if only from a stamina standpoint—since by the end, it's practically an operatic wail!

I also choose the concept of the numbers we select, and I thought this would be a fun one to do in sort of a sultry, tropical jungle-like atmosphere, me in white linen jacket & jodhpurs and knee-boots. Oh, and a pith helmet and an 8-foot bullwhip! The ladies were attired in rather diaphanous and miniscule harem girl outfits ("Pity me!" indeed!!). The audience was very

responsive to the number (and the entire weekend, in fact—there were over 10,000 attendees at this past weekend's two-day event!). At the next event (which will be August 16-17, 2014), we'll be presenting yet another Bing hit, "Dancing in the Dark" (along with "You Stepped Out of a Dream" and "Let Yourself Go"). In my experience, young people have been especially enthusiastic about the song, "Temptation," which most of them refer to as, "That one with the whip!" I happily point them to YouTube and suggest they check out the one and only recorded version: The one by Bing Crosby. A very high bar, indeed!

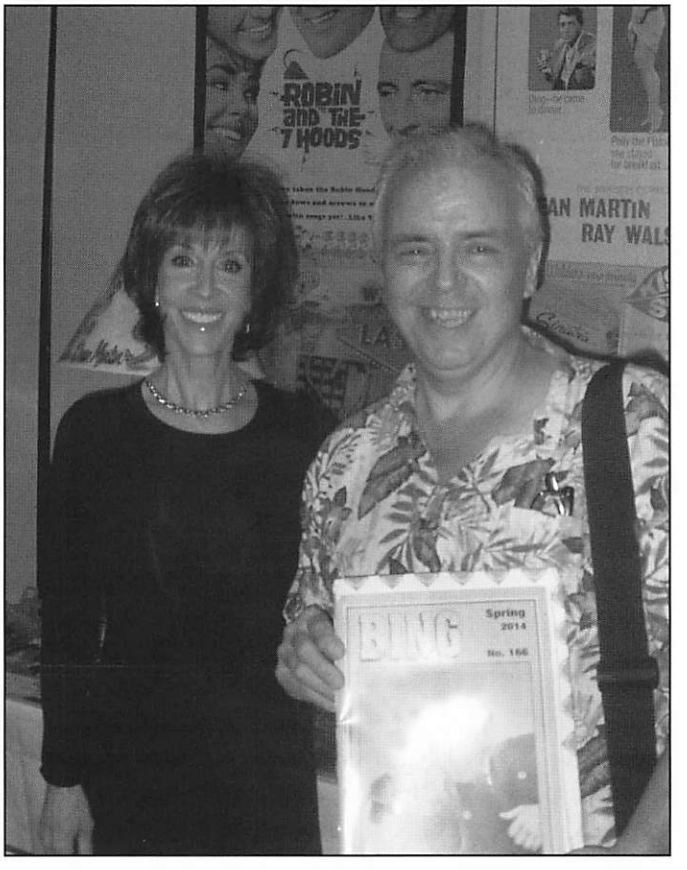
Gregory was enthusiastically received when he paid tribute at Lincoln Center in 2005 to Arthur Tracy, another co-star from Bing's halcyon days. He has also presented an annual Christmas Show which reveals his further affection for Bing. His next *Follies* appearance is sure to enchant any Crosby devotees who attend the nostalgic festivities on Governors Island this August.

For more information, visit
http://www.dreamlandorchestra.com/

Another Reason to Like New York In June

Described as "the largest collection of Dean Martin memorabilia in the world," The Dean Martin Expo took place on June 28 at The Holiday Inn on west 57th Street in Manhattan. Amassed from the personal archive of the ultimate Dean Martin historian Jim Monaco, the exhibition was graced by the presence of his friend **Deana Martin** who greeted legions of her father's fans. The amazing array of movie posters, album covers, promotional products, priceless effects illustrated the vast and multi-faceted output of the beloved star. Deana was most cordial to me as we spoke about Bing, man and magazine. After being shown the spring issue, Deana was asked if she could recall any memories of Bing and Dean. Although nothing specific immediately came to mind, she asked me to share words which couldn't be more expressive. "My dad just adored Bing." She was informed of the recent release by Bing Crosby Enterprises of Bing's 1970 NBC special, *Coolin' It,* which guest-starred her father. We then posed under a poster of *Robin and the Seven Hoods* ideally situated alongside her table. On display was her very well received memoir, *Memories Are Made of This: Dean Martin Through His Daughter's Eyes* (Three Rivers Press; 2005) which features a preface by Jerry Lewis.

Deana was shown the album-cover artwork for the proposed mid-sixties Reprise LP, *Bing, Dino, and Dixie* (with "Matty Matlock and His Paducah Patrol"). The image, reminiscent of the "Style" number in *Robin,* shows two fellow crooners in tuxedos, sporting walking sticks and holding boaters aloft. This was news to Deana, and her curiosity was further piqued by the facts that the project was assigned the issue # RS-6127 and was actually advertised under both Dean's and Bing's names on contemporary Reprise inner sleeves. We both agreed, as did Mr. Monaco, that this certainly was unusual procedure for an album which wouldn't have had at least preparatory tracks. Is there a possibility that there is more to be explored? We were all left guessing. The face on the larger than life statue of Dean at the Expo's entrance was inscrutable.



Martin McQuade shows Deana the spring edition of BING.

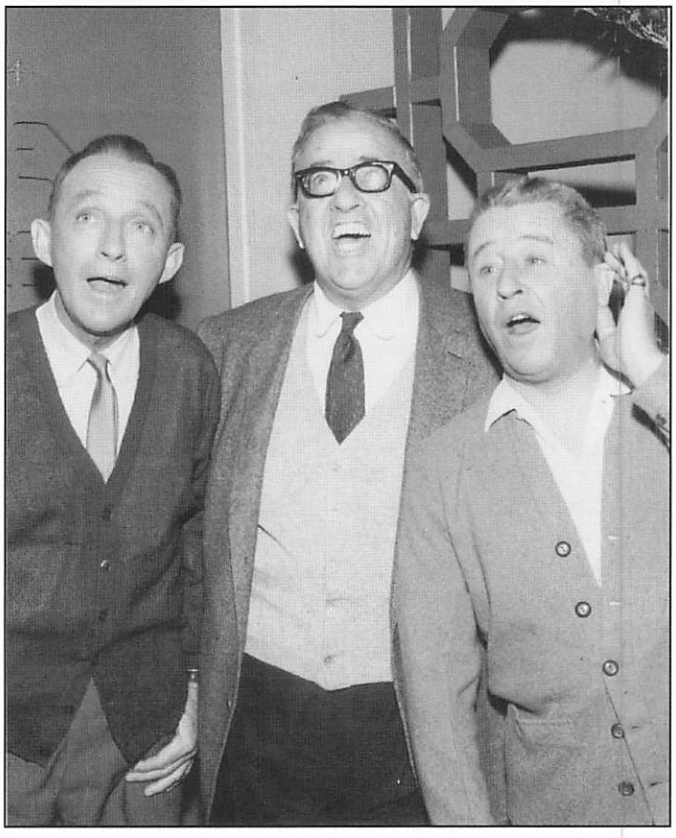
Her latest CD, *Destination Moon* contains an overdubbed duet with her father of "True Love." More information may be found at www.deanamartin.com. Mr. Monaco recently conducted an interview with Deana which appeared in the May issue of *Classic Images* and which may be may be found at http://www.classicimages.com/features/article_7933092 4-cfc1-11e3-b013-001a4bcf887a.html

The Martin Expo was the centerpiece of a greater nostalgia convention run by pop culture impresario Jerry Nolan. One of the guests was **Will Hutchins**, star of the late fifties TV western series, *Sugarfoot.* The affable cowpoke is an avid Bing fan, who regularly presented a "Crosby Corner" on his internet radio show. Will shared with me a few of his memories. After getting out of the service in the early fifties, he visited the Rancho golf course in Los Angeles. His star-struck eyes glimpsed Bing hitting a ball over the green. Glancing a wink at Will, Bing exclaimed to the enthralled crowd, "Somebody stop that ball." In 1976, Will attended Bing's concert at The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. He will never forget the thrill sitting in the front row next to Sugar Ray Robinson, whose charity was one of the beneficiaries from the evening's proceeds.

Robert Vaughn, *The Man From Uncle,* had never crossed paths with Bing, but recalls seeing Bob Crosby driving a black Lincoln Continental in 1962. He had to follow suit and purchased one for himself. Although

Barbara Feldon (Agent 99 in *Get Smart*) had no Bing anecdotes, her companion at her table did. About 40 years ago as he was hailing a cab around 11 PM, he saw Bing entering the St. Regis Hotel in New York. Their eyes met at which point Bing, clad in a plaid jacket, commented to him, "What are you doing out so late?" Since the gentleman recollected that this occurred in early summer, it was suggested that this may have been when Bing was in town in June 1973 to launch *The New York Experience.* If memory serves, Bing stated in an article featured that summer in Andy Warhol's *Interview Magazine* that he was staying at the hotel and added that he was absorbed in John Dean's testimony being given at the Senate Watergate hearings.

James Sheldon participated in the convention to promote his book, *Before I Forget*: *Directing TV 1948-1988* (Bear Mountain Media; 2011). Mr. Sheldon directed *The Bing Crosby Show*, which was broadcast on ABC during the 1964-65 season. He was reminded of the far ranging interview which he granted to me and that was featured in *Bing* # 140. *Before I Forgot* expands upon his work on the series. Although based in New York, Mr. Sheldon moved to Los Angeles in 1964 since TV production was dwindling on the east coast. The time spent with Bing is well remembered.



John Scott Trotter with Bing and George Gobel on the set.

*It was a happy time, and I kept the set happy because it wasn't necessary to "direct" Bing playing Bing. One of the things I learned as I worked with him was that he had a tendency to lose his energy as the day progressed. However, when we were working on the musical numbers in each episode, Bing was all there. That gave me the idea of having the rehearsal pianist available at all times, to play in between takes while the lighting crew got ready. The music cheered Bing, and he performed better. The atmosphere on the set was like a cocktail party. Other celebrities would drop by sometimes. Even Lucille Ball (who owned the studio [*Desilu*] would come on the set to say hello and chat with us once in a while.*

John Scott Trotter was an important member of the creative staff of the show and a joy to work with. He had been with Bing for years, and knew just what was workable for him. For the songs, Bing didn't want to pre-record the audio and then have to lip-synch to it when being filmed. Most musical films were done with pre-recording, but we did it live with a piano. Then John Scott would put it together on the dubbing stage, with the orchestra just hired for the session, and synch it to Bing's voice.

Bing was always on time and always very professional, but the perks of stardom were part of his deal on that series. Occasionally, we would use an extra camera to get more coverage without taxing Bing too much. Bing's contract also required us to finish with him by six o'clock every day. It was nice to be able to count on getting home at a reasonable hour. I also enjoyed having a home base instead of going to different locations or soundstages each day. I even had my own office and telephone at Desilu.

The Bing Crosby Show only lasted for one season. It was a pleasant half-hour, although not as successful as Crosby had been in the past. The ratings had not been great, but I'm told the reason the show wasn't picked up because Bing didn't want to continue. [During our interview, I mentioned to Mr. Sheldon that Kathryn Crosby had indicated this to me.] *At this point in his life Bing didn't need the money, or the work. The bursitis in his shoulder caused him pain, and I think he just got bored doing the show. It was a shame, because I had a lot of fun working with Bing. When he decided not to keep the series going, Bing sent me a very nice letter, which I have reproduced here.* This letter was interspersed in its entirety throughout my 2005 interview.

Mr. Sheldon continues with this tidbit. *Before the show was cancelled, Bing's company, which was run for him by Basil Grillo, packaged a pilot for a projected series starring the great Bert Lahr. Elliot Lewis, who had been a famous radio actor and a producer of The Lucy Show, produced the pilot, and I was hired to direct...However, because Bert was I his mid-seventies and because he was doing a popular commercial for a potato chip company (his famous line was "I bet you can't eat just one"), Thompson's Ghost was never sold.*

Elsewhere in his book Mr. Sheldon confides that he had difficulties directing George C. Scott in an episode of *The Virginian*. He offers a contrast to the irascible actor, who didn't take well to nuanced cues. *With Bing Crosby I could have just said, "A little softer," and he would have taken it from there."* Among the book's many illustrations is a photo of Mr. Sheldon directing Bing, Joan Fontaine and Dennis Day in the episode entitled "Operation Man Save." Another pictures him overseeing Bing at a soundboard, with Gary Crosby beaming by his side. Mr. Sheldon's memoir is a vivid recollection of the Golden Age of TV as seen through the eyes of one of the era's preeminent directors.

The Search Is By No Means Through

The National Recording Preservation Board of The Library of Congress is relentless in tracking down elusive discs. The search is impossibly painstaking, as described on its website: http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb/nrpb-LOST.html

"Despite the best efforts of the Library of Congress and other sound repositories around the world, innumerable items from the world's recorded sound history are believed to be lost. For example, it is estimated that only 2% of the 3000-plus cylinder recordings produced by the North American Phonograph Company (NAPCo) between 1889 and 1894 have been accounted for. Some other recordings commercially released or not, believed to be among the missing include recordings made by Judy Garland, Irving Berlin and even Mark Twain. There is always, however, the possibility that one or more of these may turn up in attics, basements or elsewhere. The Recorded Sound Section of the Library of Congress is currently searching for the following titles. Have you seen—or heard—any of these? (They may exist as test pressings or commercial releases, and on cylinder, disc or other media.)"

These most interesting Crosby entries appear on the Library's list of "Holy Grail" recordings: Bing Crosby: "A Cottage for Sale;" "Delicious" (1931); "Got to Wear You off My Weary Mind" (1944)

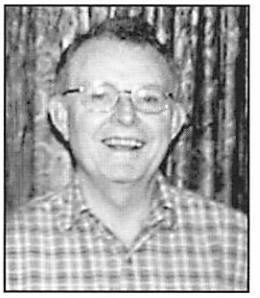
"Delicious" is a song by George and Ira Gershwin written for the 1931 film of the same name. There is documentation that Bing made a demo recording of this song with George on piano, along with two other selections from the score: "Somebody from Somewhere" and "Blah, Blah, Blah." (A fourth song, "Katinshka" may also have been recorded by Bing at this time.) Indeed, Ira once recalled the session which produced these recordings. Sadly, these performances have never been found.

"A Cottage for Sale" or "Got to Get You off My Weary Mind" are not known to exist in Bing's discography. The latter is tantalizing since research has yielded that this was a tune by Mercer and Arlen created, but never used, for Bing's 1944 Paramount musical *Here Come the Waves*. A request has been sent to the Library for further information regarding these oddities.

Renowned recording engineer David Richards, best known for producing several albums by the rock group Queen, died in December, 2013. Richards secured his first job in 1973 at Chappell Studios in London where he worked as assistant to chief engineer John Timperley recording many of the greats, including Bing Crosby. He said of the time: "I learned to respect the musicians and to never interrupt them while they were searching for an idea". Ken Barnes wrote of Timperley's involvement in those sessions in *The Crosby Years*.

Martin McQuade

Celluloid Crosby



2013 saw the release of CDs by Sepia and Sounds of Yesteryear which were comprised of material originally intended for the entertainment of US Armed Forces stationed abroad during World War II. These CDs were made up of recordings which had originally been shipped to foreign parts to provide a link with home for serving members of the army, air force and navy. The content of these recordings was primarily musical. That music was mainly popular and most performers would be familiar to servicemen from pre-service days. The recordings served as a reminder of the life those military men left behind. And no doubt it was a fervent wish of those entertainers whose voices were committed to wax that they would be remembered at the end of hostilities.

It was important for morale that service personnel remained in touch with the life they had left behind and for which they were fighting to return to. There were three main ways in which servicemen were reunited with performers who provided a link with home. Short wave radio rebroadcast popular programmes. Hollywood movies shipped to the front provided a means to escape from the horrors of war for ninety minutes. Yet by far the easiest and most accessible way to squeeze the greatest benefit from the rest and recreation time available to the troops were the V-discs which contained songs culled from the AFRS Music Library. The story of V-discs has been told in this magazine before but I want to explore the Crosby Hollywood content of those mainly vinyl 12" 78s.

The project was given Pentagon sanction and funding in July 1943. Agreement was reached with record companies, radio networks and performers to provide material for the discs free of charge. The first V-disc issues left the shores of North America in the summer of 1943. Issues continued on a more or less monthly basis until they were phased out at the end of the 1940s. The last release came in May, 1949. None of the contributors to the musical content of the discs had any say in the selection of material. However, 24 of Bing's 52 appearances on V-discs featured songs he had performed in his films. No formal records were kept of the issues so it is worth looking at how information has been gathered for this listing of Bing's movie songs.

First of all it must be said that the 1998 issue of Bing's alleged V-discs recordings as a CD set by Collectors' Choice Music was a rip off. Maybe an authentic issue lies in the future. The compilers will be able to turn to three sources to establish the complete

Crosby contribution to the V-disc project. First came "The Road to Bing Crosby V-disc Supplement". This 24 page publication dropped through my letterbox just before Christmas, 1963. The publisher is listed as the British Crosby Society and research and disc perusal is credited to **Ralph Harding** and **Bob Roberts**. In reality, it was Bob's collection which was used to establish the details which appeared in the V-disc discography. It was also Bob who provided me with a reel to reel tape of all the songs included in the supplement. His Crosby collection was stored in a room above his corner shop - Bob's Stores - in Chatham, including the turntable which was used to play the V-discs from inside to out. Bob would share all his goodies with interested collectors and believed his collection to be safe from thieves. His own insurance arrangement was to place a couple of fivers on top of a turntable in his record room. "No one wants to steal my collection but just in case they want to trash the room in frustration at finding nothing of value to them I leave them a tenner to run off with."

Until 1980 the BCS publication was my sole source of knowledge of Bing's V-disc issues. The main omissions in that groundbreaking first attempt to list Bing's V-disc contributions were the source of many of the recordings used. Then, in 1980, the Greenwood Press published "V-discs. A history and Discography" by Richard S. Sears. Over 1,500 pages listed every known V-disc issue. It anticipated amendments would follow for several of the performers listed. And so, in 1986, another hardback publication called "V-discs: the first supplement" came out. For Crosby collectors this provided a valuable addition to our knowledge because of the input from two prominent experts, both now deceased. **Ralph Harding** from the UK provided some amendments and **Larry Kiner** did likewise from across the Atlantic. They usefully identified which Bing recordings from Bing's radio programmes were dress rehearsals rather than the broadcast version. Then, in BING magazine #121 (spring 1999) a complete list of Bing's V-discs, which had been put together by BINGANG's **Wayne Martin** with additions by **Lionel Pairpoint,** was published.

There follows a chronological listing of every V-disc on which Bing sang a film song.

The last word should go to Bing. He provided the preface to the British Crosby Society V-Disc supplement. He concluded his words with the sentence: "It is very satisfying to know that my recordings are worthy of so much research."

Keith Parkinson k.parkinson1941@btinternet.com

V-disc No.	Song Title	Film	Recording Source
ARMY 128A	Please	The Big Broadcast (1932) Please (short) (1933) College Humor (1933) Duffy's Tavern (1946)	KMH 29 Jul 1943 (rehearsal)
ARMY 269-A	Small Fry	Sing You Sinners (1938)	All Time Hit Parade 18 Jun 1944
ARMY 287-A	Pennies from Heaven	Pennies from Heaven (1936)	All Time Hit Parade 18 Jun 1944
ARMY 301-A	Going My Way	Going My Way (1944)	KMH 29 Jun 1944
ARMY 301-B	Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral / Swinging on a Star	Going My Way (1944)	KMH 22 Jun 1944
ARMY 363-B	Medley "Here Is My Heart"; With Every Breath I Take / Love Is Just Around the Corner / June in January	Here Is My Heart (1934)	KMH 30 Nov 1944
ARMY 385-A	Let's Take the Long Way Home	Here Come the WAVES (1944)	KMH 4 Jan 1945

V-disc No.	Song Title	Film	Recording Source
ARMY 414-A	Down the Old Ox Road / Soon	College Humor (1933) Mississippi (1935)	KMH 11 Jan 1945 KMH 18 Jan 1945
ARMY 423-A	Wait 'Til the Sun Shines, Nellie	Birth of the Blues (1941)	Soundtrack - Army Signal Corps Film 1944
ARMY 441-A	Silent Night Adeste Fideles	Going My Way (1944) The Bells of St. Mary's (1945)	KMH 21 Dec 1944
ARMY 441-B	White Christmas	Holiday Inn (1942) White Christmas (1954)	KMH 14 Dec 1944
ARMY 463-A	That Sly Old Gentleman	East Side of Heaven (1939)	KMH 26 Apr 1945 (rehearsal)
ARMY 484-A	Too Romantic My Heart and I All You Want to Do Is dance	Road to Singapore (1940) Anything Goes (1936) Double or Nothing (1937)	KMH 22 Mar 1945 KMH 8 Mar 1945 KMH 15 Mar 1945
ARMY 525-B	Medley "Waikiki Wedding": Blue Hawaii / In a Little Hula Heaven / Sweet Leilani	Waikiki Wedding (1937)	KMH 7 Dec 1944
ARMY 542-B	The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid / Wait 'Til the Sun Shines, Nellie	Birth of the Blues (1941)	Soundtrack – Paramount promo disc, recorded May 1941
ARMY 557-A	Down by the River It's Easy to Remember Only Forever	Mississippi (1935) Mississippi (1935) Rhythm on the River (1940)	KMH 18 Jan 1945 KMH 18 Jan 1945 KMH 25 Jan 1945
ARMY 581-A/B	Medley "Dixie": Sunday, Monday or Always / She's from Missouri / Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Dixie (1943)	KMH 23 Nov 1944
ARMY 598 –A/B	Medley "Pennies from Heaven": One, Two, Button Your Shoe / So Do I / Pennies from Heaven	Pennies from Heaven (1936)	KMH 16 Nov 1944
ARMY 646-A	In the Land of Beginning Again	The Bells of St. Mary's (1945)	KMH 14 Feb 1946 (rehearsal)
ARMY 712-A/B	Medley "Rhythm on the Range": I'm an Old Cowhand / I Can't Escape from You / Empty Saddles	Rhythm on the Range (1936)	KMH 28 Dec 1944
ARMY 780-A	Country Style	Welcome Stranger (1947)	Philco 7 May 1947
ARMY 796-A	Adeste Fideles	The Bells of St. Mary's (1945)	Philco 25 Dec 1946
ARMY 797-A	White Christmas	Holiday Inn (1942) White Christmas (1954)	Philco 25 Dec 1946
ARMY 814-A	Medley "Toast to Irving Berlin": All by Myself (with Jolson) / Easter Parade	Blue Skies (1946) Holiday Inn (1942)	Philco 7 May 1947
ARMY 820-A	I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now	Blue Skies (1946)	Soundtrack – Blue Skies

Bing Crosby and the Recording Revolution

In BING #159, we gave details of Bob Phillips who worked for Bing Crosby Enterprises in the early 1950s. Since then, Bob has written an in-depth article for the IEEE Global History Network web site. The IEEE History Center, is a wiki-based platform dedicated to preserving and promoting the history of innovation in the fields of electrical engineering and its allied fields. We have great pleasure in reproducing an abridged version of the article which fits in nicely with the 60th anniversary of Bing's ending of his GE show and his switch to a 15-minute program with Buddy Cole.

Introduction

In November of 1951 I quit my job in television in Los Angeles due to the conflict with my high school classes. I could no longer spend time with the remote crews doing live broadcasts but had to live in the dull world of film control on weekends. With the remotes I put in microwave links, repaired TV cameras and installed sound and video equipment. In film control there were only western movies and commercials, and the only excitement came when the film broke.

When I left, one of the directors that worked the remotes gave me a slip of paper with an address, 9030 Sunset Blvd., and a name, Jack Mullin. The next day I went to the address and asked for Jack Mullin and found that he was expecting me. The director was a friend of Frank Healy who was the head of the Electronic Division of Bing Crosby Enterprises. He told Frank about my work at the TV station. John T. (Jack) Mullin was the Chief Engineer, and had decided to hire me based on the recommendation of the director. They knew more about me than I did. The job was to do electronic bench work for Jack Mullin because he had broken his arm. It was to be for two weeks or until his broken arm healed, but the two weeks turned into six years.

The work involved building the first practical video recorder so that Bing Crosby could record his TV shows on magnetic tape just as he was doing with his radio programs. I was the fourth member of the team that consisted of Jack Mullin and Wayne Johnson. The third member was Gene Brown who was the machinist. About a week before, they had demonstrated to the news media what has been described as the first TV picture to have been recorded on tape. All of the main Hollywood press was there, and now the pressure was on to produce the recorder. However, before going into the development of the video recorder it is important to understand the events that led up to this project.

The Audio Years

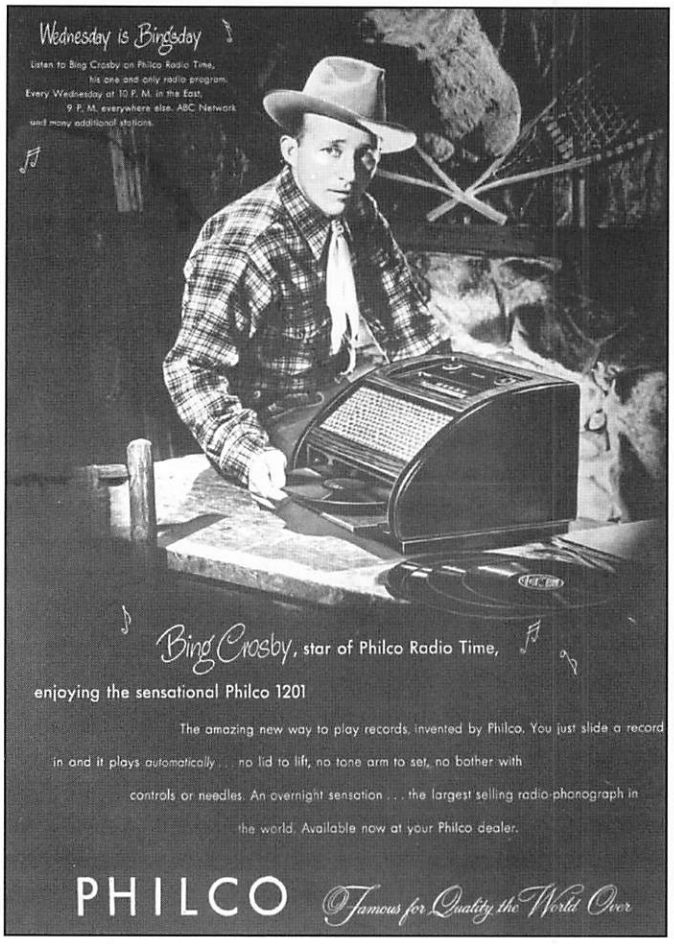
Over the months after I started working for Jack Mullin, he became my mentor and took me under his wing. He had been the person that had put the Bing Crosby radio show on magnetic tape and with Bing developed the art of editing the tape. Jack not only described to me these events, but took me to see the recording studios and equipment. He also taught me how to record and edit magnetic tape, and that prepared me to be an alternate editor for the radio show. Jack was now full time on the video tape development, and others had taken over the recording and editing work. The years of recording the radio show laid the ground work for the video tape development.

Bing Crosby was one of the pioneers of the radio music show. Beginning in 1935 the "Kraft Music Hall" on the NBC Red Network was a standard. It was a quality live production that held a high position in the ratings over the years. However, the summer of 1945 was a turning point in this standard. Bing decided that doing a live show every week was too demanding, and it did not permit him to pursue his other interests and to be with his family. It also was confining, since it all had to be done within a certain regime that took away Bing's casual side. The adlibs and jokes had to be done according to the script; there was no editing to remove mistakes.

The Bing Crosby show was aired on the elite Red Network of NBC that would not permit recorded shows; they had to be live broadcasts. So, the 1945 – 1946 "Kraft Music Hall" program began without Bing because of the dispute. The show went on, and NBC and Kraft sued him for not appearing. He returned to finish the season beginning with the 7 February 1946 program, but that was the end of Bing on the NBC Red Network. This time Bing had set his mind to having a prerecorded production. However, his current Bing Crosby Productions organization headed by his brother Everett did not have the talent to establish a prerecorded show operation and the technical support it needed. In December of 1945 Bing hired Basil Grillo to help him with this task and improve the operation of Bing Crosby Productions.

In 1941 the US Government broke up the NBC empire and made it sell its Blue Network. NBC had its sophisticated programs on the Red Network and the other features like jazz on the Blue Network. In July 1943 NBC announced the sale of its Blue network, but it took several years for ABC to develop its own programs. They shared the NBC facilities at Sunset and Vine in Hollywood until at least 1948. After the breakup ABC needed programs with high ratings and the upcoming 1946 – 1947 season was no exception. They told Bing that if he joined ABC he could record his show but the quality had to be equal to the live broadcast. It was to be a 30 minute show known as the "Philco Radio Time" program.

A number of events happened during January 1946 before Bing accepted the ABC offer. Bing Crosby Enterprises was reorganized, and a division of it was dedicated to the production of the prerecorded radio show. It included a person, Francis (Frank) Healey, to supervise the technical parts of the production. Prior to this Bing did not have his own technical staff, since the NBC engineers provided that support. By the end of January 1946, Bing had settled with NBC and was well on the way to having his own prerecorded show on ABC


Wednesday is Bingsday
Listen to Bing Crosby on Philco Radio Time, his one and only radio program. Every Wednesday at 10 P. M. in the East, 9 P. M. everywhere else. ABC Network and many additional stations.
Bing Crosby, star of Philco Radio Time,
enjoying the sensational Philco 1201
The amazing new way to play records, invented by Philco. You just slide a record in and it plays automatically . . . no lid to lift, no tone arm to set, no bother with controls or needles. An overnight sensation . . . the largest selling radio-phonograph in the world. Available now at your Philco dealer.
PHILCO
Famous for Quality the World Over

The new 1946 – 1947 "Philco Radio Time" program began with Bing Crosby recording his show on transcription disks using the NBC recording facilities assigned to ABC and supervised by Frank Healey. However, all was not well with this new production. The recordings on the disks lacked the quality of the live show and the editing process was difficult. The show was done as a live production, but with additional recorded material that could be used if there was a problem. While it took two disks (15 minutes each) for the thirty minute show, the recordings were edited before the show was played at the appointed time on the ABC network.

The prerecorded show permitted changes to be made if Bing or his staff did not like something in the show. The sponsor also was known to require changes that could not be done with a live show. The editing process was difficult, since it required recording from one disk to another several times. At least two or three playback units were required to permit the different parts to be merged on to a new recording disk, and with each copy the sound quality dropped. At times this process took over forty disks and many days to complete the edit. The result was that the quality of the recorded show was less than desirable, and the radio audience noticed the difference. The ratings dropped, and ABC began to question if they should not return to the live broadcast.

The Recording Revolution

While the Crosby show was struggling with the disk recordings, a new technology had arrived. Jack Mullin had returned from his World War II service with parts for two German Magnetophon magnetic tape recorders that he had shipped back in mail sacks over a number of months. Instead of going back to the telephone company, he joined a friend, William Palmer, in a recording and movie business. William Palmer had a machine shop where they restored and modified the Magnetophon. Jack made new electronics using standard American parts and replaced the DC bias with AC bias to improve the tape signal-to-noise and added pre-emphasis for the high frequencies. These rebuilt Magnetophon recorders were then used in their recording business.

In May 1946 Jack Mullin demonstrated the modified Magnetophon recorder at an IRE (IEEE) show in San Francisco with the help of William Palmer. This demonstration caused a number of people to take notice of the quality that could be obtained from a magnetic tape recorder. There were other tape recorders at that time, but none of them had the outstanding quality of the rebuilt Magnetophon. During the following months William Palmer set up a number of demonstrations of the recorder for Jack to various movie, recording and broadcast people. The demonstrations showed that the recorder could reproduce sound as if it were live. Not only that, the magnetic tape could be edited by cutting it with a pair of scissors and splicing it with Scotch tape.

These demonstrations were more of a novelty to the industry than a major step forward. After all there were only two recorders and only 50 rolls of tape that no longer was made. The movie companies had made other agreements for their sound tracks, and the recording companies were happy with their recording process. During the demonstrations in the summer of 1947 Frank Healey, who was involved with technical production of the Crosby show, heard a demonstration and encouraged Murdo McKenzie, the producer of the Bing Crosby show, to investigate them for the show. Murdo arranged for a demonstration in San Francisco where Jack and Bill Palmer had their business. This demonstration was after the bad experience with the disk recordings, and Crosby now was faced with the prospect of finding a new way of recording the show or reverting to live broadcasts again. Murdo was so impressed with the tape process that he arranged for Bing to hear the demonstration, which took place about the first of August 1947 in Los Angeles. When Bing heard the sound quality and saw the editing, Jack Mullin was asked to do a test recording of the first Bing Crosby show of the 1947 – 1948 season. It was only a week away, and the Crosby people expressed concerns that Jack had only two recorders and a limited amount of tape. There needed to be a way forward other than just the Magnetophon.

Jack had made an agreement with Colonel Ranger of Ranger Industries a year earlier to provide him with information so that Ranger could build a version of the Magnetophon and supply tape for it. Tests had shown that the Minnesota Mining (3M) tape would not work with the German recorder. By this time 3M had developed a black oxide plastic backed tape that evolved from their paper backed tape. It was the Scotch Magnetic Tape No. 100 designed for the Brush recorder, which was an early tape recorder. However, the Magnetophon needed a tape that could record a stronger magnetic field and have a better signal-to-noise ratio. The research

group at 3M realized this need and set out to develop a higher grade tape using a red oxide, not knowing what the target machine would be. During this period Ampex also had decided to build a broadcast quality tape recorder and asked Jack for assistance, but Jack could not help due to the agreement with Colonel Ranger. As the date for the Crosby recording session approached the tension grew. Colonel Ranger did come to Los Angeles with his two recorders but no new tape. His tape recorders were set up alongside the Magnetophon recorders in the recording department of NBC who was still supporting ABC. The show was held on the evening of 10 August 1947, and the moment of truth had come. The NBC engineers recorded the show on the standard disk lathes, and Jack Mullin and Colonel Ranger also recorded on their respective machines. Murdo asked Ranger to play his recording first, and it was terrible with distortion and noise. Jack was next, and history was made. The first radio show to be recorded on magnetic tape was broadcast on 1 October 1947.

Bing and Gary Cooper record the first radio show on magnetic tape.

Jack, who was still working for Palmer, was given an old studio and control room in the NBC (ABC) facilities where he could set up his machines and do the recording and editing of the show. It also served as his office. The 1947 – 1948 season was the first time a radio program was aired from a magnetic tape recording even though the program was transferred to disk for broadcast. This transfer was due to the need to preserve the tape and insure that a tape break would not disrupt the broadcast. The quality of the show had improved even though disks were used, since the show was only transferred in final form and not edited on the disks. However, more important, the ratings of the show improved and the prerecorded show was preserved. The first step had been taken, but a bigger problem still needed to be addressed – new recorders and tape.

Alexander M. Poniatoff, the head of Ampex, heard one of the early demonstrations of the Magnetophon. He was in need of a new postwar product and was so taken by the recorder he decided to build one. He put his chief engineer, Harold Lindsay, in charge of the project and asked Jack Mullin to help them. Unfortunately Jack had already made the agreement with Colonel Ranger by that time, but Ampex decided to go ahead with the project anyway. After the poor showing of his recorders to the Crosby group, Colonel Ranger was persuaded by them and Jack Mullin to give up his agreement with Mullin. Jack was now free, and a call was placed to Ampex in October 1947. Minnesota Mining (3M) also was brought in as the tape supplier.

Ampex by the spring of 1948 had developed their first prototype, but lacked finances to bring it to market. The banks did not have any idea about venture capital at that time. Pressure once again began to build because the Bing Crosby show needed new recorders and tape for the 1948 – 1949 season. Everyone was convinced that Ampex was the answer, and Bing sent them a check for $50,000 in just an envelope without any cover letter. It was what Ampex needed to begin production of the Ampex 200. In late 1947 Jack Mullin visited Minnesota Mining (3M) to see if they could provide the required magnetic tape to work with the Magnetophon and the future Ampex recorder. By then they had started development of their new red oxide tape that would work with the Ampex recorder. Jack Mullin began to work with Robert Herr and William Wetzel of 3M conducting tests to help develop a high quality magnetic tape for audio recording. His work focused on the dropout rating, frequency response and signal-to-noise for the different test tapes that 3M produced. The result was the Scotch Magnetic Tape No.111 that later evolved into the No. 111A. For these efforts by Bing and Jack, Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) was awarded in 1948 the distributorship west of the Mississippi River for the Ampex recorders and the 3M tape. The Electronic Division of BCE under Frank Healey was given responsibility to market and service these products. The division began to grow when Jack Mullin left Palmer to become its chief engineer in August 1948 to support the development work with Ampex and 3M and in 1949 with the addition of a salesman, Tommy Davis.

Harold Lindsay led the team to produce the Ampex 200 for Alex Poniatoff and Bing in the 1948. It was housed in a polished black wood console with a stainless steel top that caused it to be called the most beautiful recorder to be made. The Crosby show received the first two of them, serial numbers 1 and 2, in time for the 1948 – 1949 season. Later the only two portable Ampex 200 recorders built, serial numbers 13 and 14, were delivered. Each of them consisted of two wooden boxes with handles. It took at least two people to carry each case, but they were taken everywhere the Crosby show went during the later part of the 1948 -1949 season, even to Canada. Jack Mullin described how they had to push and pull the four boxes up a spiral staircase to reach one

of the upper dressing rooms where the recorders were set up. The audio mixing was done at the stage level using the RCA OP-6 and OP-7 equipment. The output was fed over a telephone line to the recording location.

By the 1949 – 1950 season the Bing Crosby show had moved to CBS, and BCE had to establish its own recording-editing facility. It was a small facility located in the CBS Columbia Square Complex at 6121 Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. It was on the second floor in the east wing of the complex. The recorders were located in the front of the building. There were two windows that were open most of the time, and people on Sunset Boulevard could hear the editing process. The three Ampex 300 recorders were on a waist-high shelf with a special tape speed control unit and acoustical equalizer at one end. In the hallway outside the room, there were shelves of indexed tapes of past recording sessions. By 1950 others like Robert McKinney were involved in the recording and editing of the show. In Hollywood the live show was done at the CBS studios and in a theater behind CBS. The microphone placement and mixing of the show was done by Norm Drews. He was a true professional held in high esteem by Jack Mullin. It has been said that the balance of the shows recorded was outstanding. There were no multiple tracks, just one channel that was fed to the recorders.

Those of us in the recording room had no visible contact with what was happening. I used to sing along with Bing during the recording sessions, since I was the only one there at times. I may have sung more "duets" with him than most people, but it helped to learn his phrasing for editing.

During the first two seasons that used the magnetic tape recorders, the Crosby radio show was recorded in front of a live audience when Bing was available. There were recorded rehearsals, but the editing process was limited by having only two recorders. The first season that was recorded on the old Magnetophon tape had to be transferred to transcription disks because of concerns about the old tape breaking. With the new Ampex recorders and 3M tape, this transfer was no longer required, but the editing was still limited by having only two Ampex 200 recorders.

With the recording of the show, Bing was more relaxed and the audience had more fun with the adlibs, since mistakes could be repaired. The quality was equal to a live show, and the broadcast version was mistake free. With the portable recorders the show also could be taken on the road, if Bing wanted to travel. By early 1949 Ampex had begun to produce the Ampex 300, which was smaller and lighter than the Ampex 200. The big plus was that the Bing Crosby show now had three recorders for the 1949 – 1950 season. These changes opened the door to new innovation, and the Crosby show did not lose time in coming up with new ways to record a radio show.

The Development of the Recording Art

With three recorders Bing, Murdo and Jack set out to see how the show could move away from the basic live audience format. No one had done this type of program before; so these three men were establishing a new art form. During the previous seasons the show was done live and recorded on tape. These shows could be recorded when Bing had the time, and more than one program was recorded during these sessions. However, only limited editing could be done, since there were only two tape recorders. There were others during this period editing tape, but they were using recorders that were intended for the general market. The high quality magnetic tape recordings of radio programs took tape editing to another level.

There were a number of issues that arose as a result of using tape. With the higher bandwidths of the new Ampex recorders it was possible to hear things that were hidden by the lower quality recorders. There were problems due to timing (or tape speed) and wow and flutter that had to be resolved. In addition, the tape also caused dropouts due to imperfections in the oxide that was coated on the plastic backing. To solve this problem Minnesota Mining (3M) was trying different coating techniques for their 111 audio recording tape, and Jack Mullin would test each new batch to determine the dropout rate. After a number of trials 3M produced the 111A tape that became the industry standard.

Since Bing did not read music and sang by ear, one take of a song could be in a different key from the second take. This change in pitch posed a problem when using segments from different recording sessions to make one complete piece of music. Today matching the pitch is easy with digital technology, but in 1950 it was different. To do the matching one tape was slowed down and the other was speeded up until the pitch was the same. However, the change in tape speed led to timing problems; so after the splice was made the tape was then slowly returned to its normal speed. Unless one was listening very closely it was not detectable. With the advent of the Ampex 300, Jack Mullin worked with Ampex to develop a unit to work with the Ampex 300 recorders that produced a 100 kHz signal and process it on playback. The unit then controlled the speed of the Ampex 300 capstan motor so the 100 kHz signal was correct. Not only did it fix the timing problem, but it was able to correct some of the low frequency wow effects. It was now possible to record a tape on one machine and play it back on a different machine without speed changes that caused changes in the pitch of the music. It also was used to change the tape speed to match the different pitches.

Another major problem was not being able to play from two machines and record on a third. The ability to fade from one program segment to another was limited. These edits had to be preplanned in the recording process, but at times long diagonal cuts were made that would allow one segment to fade and the other to get louder. This process was difficult and was not used unless it was the last resort. The Magnetophon recordings were made at 30 inches per second (ips), which made the long cuts impossible. The Ampex 200 operated at both 30 and 15 ips while the Ampex 300 normally operated at both 15 and 7.5 ips. At these lower speeds the long cuts were possible.

With the high speeds, the normal cuts were made with a pair of scissors and Scotch tape. In most cases it was possible to cut the tape as it was running since there was a lot of room for error. Jack Mullin had great ear-to-

hand coordination and could make the cuts even at 15 ips. I used to do it as well, but not with the accuracy that the Jack had. When it came to cutting a note or syllable it required the tape to be stopped and moved back and forth until the correct spot could be located. The head gate was then opened and the tape cut at the playback head gap. Jack and I did not use any splicing blocks since we were able to cut the tape at the same angle; however, in most cases the ends of the tape were overlapped. This overlap caused problems when rewinding the tape since the splices would get caught going through the head gate. The tape in the early days was put together using Scotch tape that would stick to the other winding of tape on the reel. To prevent the sticking, talcum powder was used, and it is still present today in the early tapes being restored. About 1951 3M produced a splicing tape that eliminated the sticking problem. One of the great edits of Jack Mullin was made late at night on 2 November 1948 when it was found out the Truman had won the election instead of Dewey. When the show was recorded, Bing said that Dewey had won. With no "Truman" recorded by Bing, Jack had to manufacture the name using the existing tape and do it with the Ampex 200 recorders.

When the Crosby Show received its three Ampex 300 machines, the editing process changed as did the format of the radio show. The early radio programs were recordings of live shows with little editing, but the later shows were assembled from many different recordings. One of the new innovations of this period was the introduction of recorded audience reactions. Fake laughter always had been around. It was added by turning the volume up and then fading it down. The same laughter was used every time, and it became known as "canned laughter." After one live show where the guest and Bing caused much audience reaction that had to be cut, Jack Mullin was going to throw out the rejected tape. Bing happened to be there at the time and told him to save it for future use. Thus the new "laugh track" was started. By the time I began to edit, the "laugh track" had grown to forty-two different segments. These ranged from great outbursts of laughter to the groans of the audience. The orchestra had their reactions as did the lady in the balcony.

The radio program by now was scripted down to each segment of tape. These segments came from many different sources that had to be matched. The acoustics of Bing's ranch house in Elko had to match with the characteristics of the studios in Hollywood and New York. The Marine Auditorium in San Francisco had to agree with a theater in Canada. To match the acoustics, Jack Mullin built a filter box where the audio characteristics could be altered and echo added if required. When a recording session was held, material was recorded for four to six shows. Portions of these sessions also included a live audience, and parts of it would be used in other shows.

Separate segments also were recorded to keep the shows current. These were made wherever Bing happened to be, and the same applied to the guests on the show. The acoustics of Bing's ranch in Elko and remote studios had to be accommodated in the editing process. Besides these different sources, a large library of recorded material was created that was crossed referenced by date, artist and subject. This catalogue made it possible to reuse old recordings and cut back on the new recording sessions.

Each radio program was assembled from the different sources according to the script. During the editing process different short segments of tape were attached to a line that was above the recorders with the number of the segment, but the longer ones were kept on reels that were numbered. Once the music segments were edited and put into one continuous program, the voice segments were added and the program was cut to the proper time. This cutting of the program involved the editing of verses, refrains or portions of them so that the program was the correct length to be broadcast. The audience reactions were then added that involved listening to the program and deciding what type of reaction was required. Bad jokes got bad responses and good ones got good ones. However, the process somewhat involved the ear of the beholder and arguments occurred between the editors. Murdo made the final decision. He sat on a bar stool behind the editors with an old Paris taxi horn attached to its side. To get the editors attention he would squeeze its large bulb. We had the speakers turned up so loud, it was difficult to hear him. Besides the standard reactions to the banter between the parties on the show, other reactions were injected where it appeared that something was happening with the orchestra or on the stage.

This editing might be described as the high point of recorded shows. Many of these editing techniques then were used by the radio networks and record companies. The Bing Crosby radio show during its last few seasons produced shows that never happened the way they were heard by the radio audience. This art form was created by the talents of Bing Crosby and Jack Mullin. It was made possible by the recorders produced by Ampex and the magnetic tape manufactured by Minnesota Mining (3M).

The Desire for Video Recording

By 1953 Bing was facing a new problem, television. He was being asked to do television shows instead of radio, but there was no easy way to record a television program as he was doing with his radio show. In 1951 Bing asked Jack Mullin if he could record television on tape the way the radio show was recorded. Jack told Bing that he did not see why it could not be done, and Bing put money into the Electronic Division of Bing Crosby Enterprises so that Jack could build him a recorder. Jack Mullin probably had taken on the greatest challenge of his life. He never said anything to me about not being able to do it. I believe that he and Wayne Johnson thought that it could be done. It was to be a long hard struggle.

The Bing Crosby radio show on CBS continued until the end of the 1953 season, which was on 30 May 1954. In early 1954 Bing had made the difficult decision to end the production, which meant that many lifelong relationships were to change or be severed. The first television show that involved Bing was a telethon on 21 June 1952 that he co-hosted with Bob Hope to help finance the American Olympic team. However, the first

big Bing Crosby television show was produced in 1953 and aired on 3 January 1954. It was a mixture of his radio show and 35 mm movie technologies. The audio for the television program was prerecorded and edited in the same manner as his radio show was. The audio was then played back and synced with the 35 mm movie cameras.

Bing in his 1954 TV show

The 1954 show was the first real introduction of Bing Crosby to the television audiences. However, he had been doing walk-ons and other television appearances on shows hosted by other people. To keep his name in front of the radio audiences, Bing prerecorded short radio shows beginning in 1954 and going into 1962. These included shows with Buddy Cole and his group and Rosemary Clooney that were syndicated and distributed to stations that wanted them. Buddy Cole used a recording technique invented by Les Paul, who also was a good friend of Bing. The record over-process is where one person would play or sing different parts. Each part then would be mixed with the earlier parts and recorded over the previous one. Bing gave Les Paul one of the Ampex 400 recorders, and Les modified it with a second playback head. This modification permitted him and his wife Mary Ford to do their famous record-over recordings. Les Paul also worked with Jack Mullin at the Electronic Division to improve the process.

The show with Buddy Cole lasted until 1958 when Bing had a video recorder to use. It was during this period that many changes came to tape recording. A lot of them were from Jack Mullin and the Electronic Division of the Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) operating out of a small facility in the BCE Building at 9030 Sunset Boulevard. The road to the video recorder was much more involved and slower than Bing would have liked. He always was around to encourage the project, and when Ampex decided to build their version he was supportive of them. Bing wanted a video recorder.

Bing Crosby Enterprises

When the Electronic Division of Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) was created by Basil Grillo in 1946, the main office was located in a small three-story building at 9028 Sunset Boulevard near the corner with Dohney Drive. It was built in 1936 by Bing as his main office. While Everett Crosby was the head, Basil Grillo always was in the background. The day-to-day operations were handled by Larry Crosby who held forth on the second floor. By 1951 the left side of the first floor was a Swedish masseuse, and on the right side was the location of the BCE Electronic Division (9030 Sunset Boulevard). In 1949 it became the sales office for Ampex and 3M products, but by the time I arrived it also was the location for the video tape development under Jack Mullin. Tommy Davis had moved to a small building next to the BCE building, and Frank Healey and his wife Hoppie, who was his secretary, were confined to the front of the sales space with the Ampex recorder display.

Since the recording companies and the radio networks had decided that the Ampex/3M approach was the answer there was not much sales work to be done, except for tracking orders. However, Tommy Davis went searching for new markets and found that the recording of instrumentation signals was ready for tape. He traveled around with an Ampex in the back of his station wagon signing up new customers. One of his other tasks was to service the recorders, and that was becoming a major job. I was asked to help him in the beginning and learned a lot about tape recorders and the recording process by having to repair them. We traveled to many of the missile, aircraft and nuclear test sites where the recorders were being used. My support to the sales group ended when they hired Robert Hopkin who took over most of the servicing…

Bing records on his Ampex recorder.

The BCE Video Recorder

While there were many interesting experiences working at Bing Crosby Enterprises, none was as challenging as the development of a video recorder for Bing. When Jack told Bing in 1951 that it could be done, Bing responded by setting up the video recorder project to be led by Jack in the Electronic Division. Mullin reached out and recruited Wayne Johnson to assist him, and by 11 November 1951 they demonstrated the first video picture from magnetic tape. It was a video of an airplane taking off. The image was very snowy and the airplane was a dark blob, but with the commentary by Frank Healey everyone managed to see the takeoff. Frank was an ex-movie producer.

I started with BCE about a week later and found myself involved in the construction of what I call the Mark II version. The Mark I system used the top plate from one of the portable Ampex 200 recorders modified to operate at 360 ips (20 MPH) with a modified head that gave it a bandwidth of about 1 MHz. The tape was quarter-inch, and the reels did not have any sides to reduce once-a-round effects. This lack of sides produced large piles of tape if something went wrong. At times I had to go out the front door and down Sunset Blvd. with the tape to get it back on the reel. The drive was an early version of the tight loop

Caption: (l-r) Jack Mullin, Frank Healy, Wayne Johnson and Bing behind the Mark 2 recorder equipment racks in the BCE Electronic Lab on Sunset Blvd.

…During the 1952 and 1953 period the major effort was concentrated on improving the frequency response and reducing the tape speed. Many heads designs were tested using different types of magnetic materials, gap sizes and materials, and head windings. To make the heads, a precision optical lapping capability was installed along with a way of winding the coils on the assembled head segments. After trying many different head configurations, it was realized that there was a limitation in recording high frequencies on magnetic tape. A point was reached where changes in the head configuration and the tape speed made little difference in the upper frequency that could be recorded.

There were a number of other groups that were working on the video recorder. One of these was RCA, and its chairman General David Sarnoff wanted one for his birthday. By 1953 they had demonstrated a system that ran at 360 inches per second like the first BCE machine in 1951. It had better quality using video compression, but only lasted 4 minutes per reel. The same year Sarnoff of RCA and his board of directors visited BCE to see if they could buy our recorder. The party arrived in a number of black limousines. Sarnoff was in the first dressed in gray and the board in the rest, dressed in black. As Sarnoff marched up the driveway the board fell in two-by-two behind him. They went into our small laboratory for the demonstration. Sarnoff sat in the middle and the board on either side of him. After the demonstration they went upstairs to the conference room. Sarnoff told Frank Healey that he wanted to buy the recorder, and Frank told him it was not for sale. Sarnoff told Frank that he would just buy them out; to which Frank replied "You do not have enough money!" The RCA group left.

… A number of different cuts were tested until proper configuration was found. The result of the head "beauty treatment" was to reduce the tape speed and produce a new design for the recording of the video information. The new "Mark III" recorder operated at 100 ips with half-inch tape using longitudinal recording and no scanning. It recorded color video and sound with three heads - video, color, and sound/reference. The recorder also employed video compression techniques, and an early version was demonstrated in February 1955. The recorder was further refined and demonstrated in June 1955. Based on the performance of this new recorder CBS ordered three of them, and the summer of that year we worked building them. In late 1955 Bing asked Jack Mullin to visit Ampex to see their video tape recorder. We knew that they were working on one, but did not know how far they had come.

Jack went to Ampex near the end of the year and came back with the news that it was over, Ampex had a better recorder. Bing sent another $50,000 check to Ampex for the first of their video recorders. It was delivered to his TV station in Washington State. Ampex demonstrated their rotary head machine on 14 April 1956; CBS cancelled their order with BCE and bought the Ampex recorder. The Mark III recorders were then converted to wide band instrumentation recorders and sold.

The Wideband after Video

The year 1956 began with a new direction for the Electronics Division; the video tape work was over and the group was to be sold. The new direction for the group was established by an order from the Air Force in 1954 for an airborne wideband recorder. Much of the development work done for the video recorder could be used to build a wideband longitudinal recorder; so the core of the BCE technology was not lost.

...During 1956 Bing Crosby's brother, Everett, was tasked with finding for a buyer for the Electronics Division. While the video market was lost to Ampex, the success of the wideband recorder was the solution to the new instrumentation problems that required bandwidths beyond the traditional 100 kHz recorders. With Ampex focused on the rotary head technology that chopped some types of signals, there was an opening for wideband longitudinal recording that did not have any head switching. The 3M Company was finding that in order to keep up with the competition it had to move into the equipment market. An agreement was reached with Bing Crosby Enterprises in August 1956 to buy the Electronics Division. The transfer was made in 1957 after the Air Force contract was concluded.

When I returned to California that year from college, I found a different organization. The changeover occurred while I was traveling across the country. Jack Mullin, who was my trusted mentor, told me that I could stay, but there was much more to the world than where I had spent my last six years. I took his advice, and found myself at Sylvania EDL in Mt View, California. It was quite a change, but before long I was designing systems that had the 3M Mincom wideband recorder in them. It looked very familiar since it was based on the Bing Crosby recorder.

Jack Mullin went to 3M along with many of the Crosby group. Eugene Sakasegawa (Saki) started his magnetic head business, and the Saki magnetic head was known as one of the best. Wayne Johnson consulted with Sony in Japan on video tape recorders and became involved with the Winston tape recorder company that was started by others from BCE.

What about Bing? Well, he had his video recorder and now was doing television programs like he had done his radio shows. Many years later Bing recorded his last television program in September 1977 in London with rock star David Bowie. Since the session was recorded, these two opposites were able to put aside their nervousness when they did the duet of Little Drummer Boy. TV Guide listed the Crosby-Bowie duet as one of the 25 most memorable musical moments of 20th century television. Bing died on 14 October 1977, but it was decided to show the program. The last Christmas Show was aired on 30 November 1977.

Jack Mullin remained with 3M Mincom until his retirement. Peter Hammar, the Ampex Historian, said "He is justifiably honored as one of the greatest innovators in the history of the technology so important to broadcasting in the last half of the 20th Century: magnetic tape recording."

Bob Phillips

Carolyn's trip down memory lane

Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider, has been looking through her files.

As I sort through my collection of fan letters and book orders from the past several years, the words of praise they contain for Uncle Bing and his music are endless. Many people have written to me of these special moments or special songs that is the most meaningful to them.

I would like share some parts of these letters with the members of ICC.

Dear Carolyn,

My mother is a lifelong Crosby fan and has quite a collection of books and photos about him. I think the highlight of her life was seeing him perform at the Uris Theater in New York City the year before he died. She remembers little these days, but that memory is one of her strongest. I am pleased to purchase your book and put it under her tree this Christmas.

Dear Mrs. Schneider,

Thank you so much for your memories of your Uncle Bing. I have my memories too - - as I saw your uncle on a few occasions when he came to Pittsburgh in the 40's to catch his beloved Pirates at Forbes Field. It was a real thrill to hear him sing the Star Spangled Banner through a microphone from the pitcher's mound.

Dear Carolyn,

I enjoyed your last book and I know I will enjoy this one. After seeing "Going My Way", as an 8th grader, I entered the Minor High School Seminary. I started writing to Bing. Finally I met a classmate and fishing buddy of his who got my letter to Bing. We corresponded for years after that, right up until his death. The morning I was ordained, I received a telegram from Bing congratulating me. Put me down as one of your uncle's biggest fans.

(Signed) Monsignor R. Murphy

(Editor: Lovely to read these nice letters. As members will recall, Carolyn is an expert on the subject of the jacket made by Levi's for Bing in 1951. She was therefore delighted to see the following photograph of Sir Richard Branson wearing one of the reproductions of the jacket.

For their Spring Summer 2014 campaign, Levi's® Vintage Clothing reproduced this famous piece of Levi's® history and made a limited run of 200 jackets. All of the details are true to the original. Sir Richard was speaking at the Scottish Business Awards in May and we understand that the owner of the Levi brand was with him and no doubt encouraged him to wear the jacket. A number of web sites are now offering the jackets at $1800 each.)

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Keith Parkinson, Eccleston, St. Helens, UK

BING 166 reached the high standard you've set for the magazine. Two articles stood out. "Walt's First Park" was an intriguing discovery about a Bing-Disney collaboration, Perhaps the relationship resulted in *Ichabod and Mr. Toad* some ten years later. Paul F. Anderson's research into the proposed Hollywood Sports Garden filled another gap in our knowledge of all things Crosby. And John Newton's explanation of the non-commercial recordings linked to Bing's films of the 1930s revealed a lot I didn't know.

The magazine piece "Stage show recreates Hope-Crosby radio show magic" set me thinking about how audiences in the 21st century would relate to this. In 2002 Radio Spirits Inc. released a 20 disc set comprising 40 of Hope's radio shows spanning the years 1938 to 1954. The programmes' topical references meant little to me but obviously meant a lot to the live audiences who went into spasms of laughter at every quip. There were a few highlights. Bing guested on a couple of the shows and the vocals by regular contributors like Skinnay Ennis and Margaret Whiting justified the wait. Because you had to wait - the discs were not programmed for the playing of individual tracks - only dedicated Crosby completists should seek them out.

Preston Neal Jones, by email from Hollywood, CA.

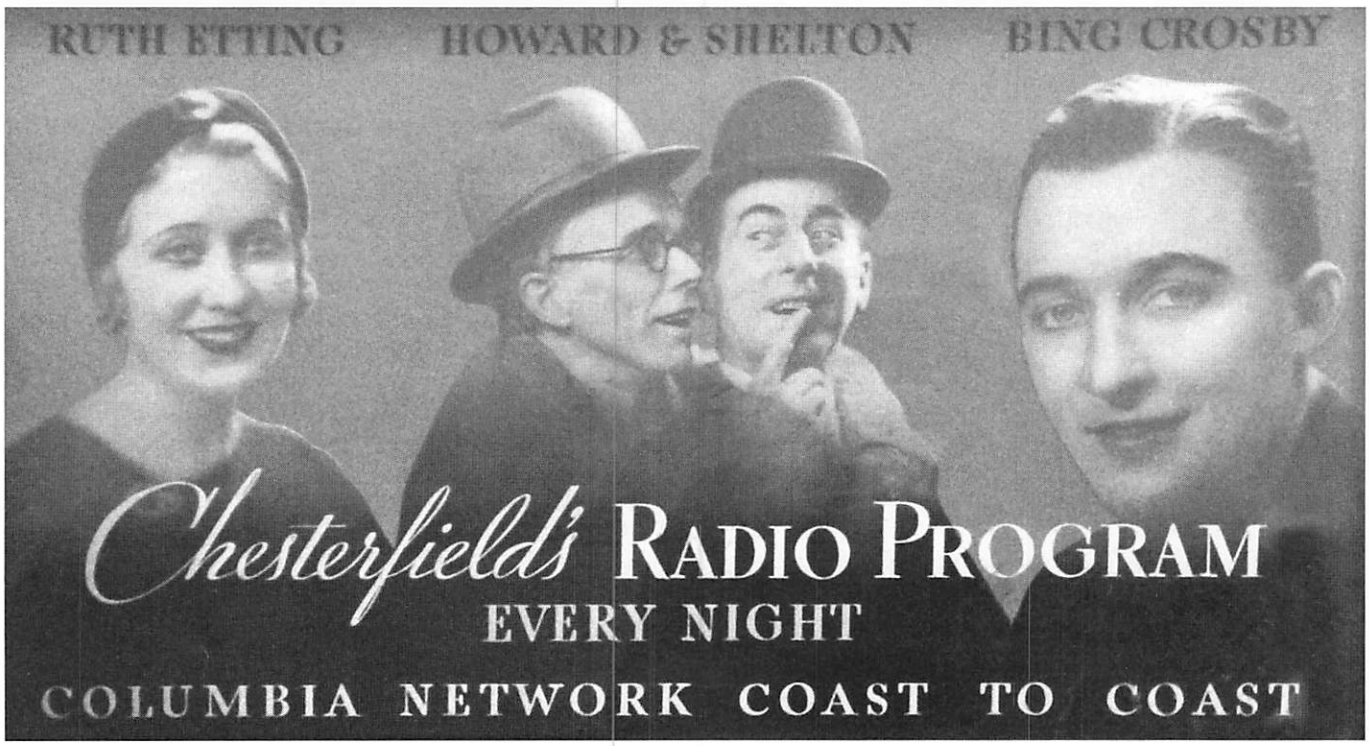
As always, I'm having a wonderful time savoring the contents of the newest issue (Spring 2014 #166). I'm interrupting myself mid-savor, however, to offer one small correction. R. Emmet Sweeney's essay on *The Bells of St. Mary's* for the Olive BluRay identifies the actress playing the maid as "Beulah Bondi, from McCarey's *Make Way for Tomorrow*." The great Ms. Bondi was indeed from *Make Way for Tomorrow*, to say nothing of *It's a Wonderful Life* and countless other classics—but she was not from *The Bells of St. Mary's*. The Irish actress who gives that great line-reading on "up to your neck in nuns" was the inimitable Una O'Connor, whose extensive filmography also includes *The Informer, The Bride of Frankenstein* and *Witness for the Prosecution*.

How curious that this blooper appears not in a book or periodical but in Olive's own BluRay packaging. Did nobody at Olive look at the movie, or proof-read the text? I hope the film-to-video transfer received more care, Even more, I hope that the disc sells well enough to encourage Olive and others to produce more Bing movies for home-viewing.

John Newton, by email from Wilmington, Delaware, USA

First, a quick note to say I enjoyed reading about myself in the most recent issue of BING.

Second, a bit more than a month ago I "found" something that was "new" to me. This might well have already been familiar to you or some other Bing enthusiasts, but I don't believe I had ever seen it before.



Oddly enough, I learned about it via a telephone call from a friend. He'd called me one afternoon and advised that he'd just been looking at an on-line auction/sale, and saw a poster for the Bing Crosby Chesterfield radio program.

My first reaction was to think of the later Chesterfield program, and shrug it off, until my friend said, "No, no.. the *early* Chesterfield program that Bing shared with Ruth Etting. .. The 'Music That Satisfies' program."

My ears perked up at that news and I quickly and thankfully ended the call, to have a look for myself. After I entered Bing's name, Ruth Etting and Chesterfield, I was rather surprised to see not one, but two different offerings of the poster. One was in rather poor condition, but the other looked fine. (Naturally, I ended up getting both of them.) The poster itself is the size that was used for advertising in trolley cars or in subway (underground) cars.

If you've ever seen the 1934 film, *Dames,* during the musical production number while Dick Powell is singing "I Only Have Eyes For You" within a subway car, the scene shifts to such an advertising poster featuring Ruby Keeler's image. This is the same size as the posters for the early Whiteman-Old Gold program and Bing's Cremo program, among others.

So, Malcolm, on the odd chance that you missed this, I'll be sending you a photo of the poster separately via email.

On a totally separate subject, I don't think I mentioned another recent "disc-overy".. (I know I mentioned it to Wig during a phone call some weeks ago, but, I think, probably failed to mention it to you when I wrote about that early Chesterfield radio program poster.)

Before going further, I must mention that the newly discovered record is NOT in particularly good condition. .. The beginning of the recording is VERY rough, then gets a bit better, but I couldn't resist going after it.

It also was listed in an on-line auction, with a photo of the label, and therefore was "a gamble" when I bid on it. .. I was somewhat cautious, but kept my eye on it, and was ultimately surprised that not a single soul bid against me.

Perhaps anyone else looking at the listing didn't pay close attention, or recognize what the label *appeared* to relay. . and perhaps most didn't even care, .. I wasn't quite certain myself. . But it *looked, to me*, as if the test label, in addition to the pencil-written title, had the pencil-written notation "LA 21 B".

After I received it, of course I instantly recognized that it was, in fact, an original Brunswick shellac test pressing of a previously unknown take of Bing's "After Sundown".

To be clear, it's not drastically different from the -A take we've all known forever, but it was nevertheless, I think, a significant find: another previously unknown alternate from Bing's Brunswick period...some 80+ years after it was recorded.

I know that when my friend Michael Brooks searched the then-Columbia-SONY vaults, for unissued Brunswick takes for those 3 volumes of Bing LPs that appeared around 1978, this take was not there. He pretty much made all discovered takes available following their re-discovery.

I have played that test pressing of Brunswick LA-21-B and as I remembered, Bing's timing is just slightly different in the verse of "B", and during the choruses Bing holds several notes differently .. a slightly longer note here, a slightly shorter note there. .. And, at the very end of the recording, on the take that we all have known for decades, during the last long-held syllable of Sun-DOWN, we hear two strong notes by the orchestra, followed shortly after by a third note to end the recording.

On take "B", that last third note by the orchestra is simply missing. It doesn't exist on "B", making the recording seem to end abruptly, probably because we are conditioned, after so many years of hearing take "A", to "expect" that last note.

David Currington, by email from Turramurra, Australia.

The current BING magazine had some great, diverse and interesting articles. Thank you for putting together such a treasure.

It is interesting how coincidences of timing can occur. I have just watched the recent movie *Saving Mr Banks* which depicts how Walt Disney was able to fulfil a promise he'd made to his daughters twenty years earlier to bring *Mary Poppins* to the screen. With Walt in my mind, I was intrigued to find the article about the aborted Garden venture between Disney and Bing. Although the venture failed, the friendship must have endured for at least some time longer as Walt was a guest on Bing's KMH of 8 February 1940 where they dueted on 'Hi Diddle De Dee'.

Another coincidence related to John Newton, whose article was particularly riveting. His name, too, was floating around in my head even before I opened the magazine...When I visited with you a few years back, there had been strong suggestions from John of using his source material for a CD. That did not eventuate, and I wonder if you think the time is right for a direct approach to John to make his rarest of rare tracks that otherwise would not see the light of day available for a CD or two? As we know, he organised four LP issues using his collection of various artists' rarities which each featured at least one Bing track...

Yes, Malcolm, a good magazine which has entertained and enthused me – and I'm sure so many other members.

(Editor: A year or so back, John Newton very kindly provided a number of rare Bing movie linked tracks from

his incredible collection and a CD was prepared for consideration by Sepia Records. Unfortunately Sepia did not wish to proceed as sales of their recent Bing CDs had been disappointing. We are however discussing the possibility of them issuing the recently discovered Kraft songs.)

Bert Bishop, by email from Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex UK.

Thanks for the latest issue of BING. As always lots to savour and enjoy.

Reading the obituary of Shirley Temple, whose birth I preceded by some twelve weeks, I was reminded of the song, "But Definitely" she sang in her 1936 film *Poor Little Rich Girl* which included a parody of "Where the Blue of the Night" the opening lines of which go:

"When you are crooning the Blue of the Day and whistling the Gold of the Dawn - Bing, Bing,

Are you my favourite?, you know that you are, but definally [sic], boo, ba, ba. ba, boo."

She, with chorus, concludes the song with the line:

"The name of this song ain't Dinah, the name of this song ain't Dinah, it's But Definally: tchaa!"

That latter sound being her vocalised cymbal noise as similarly heard on the Bing - Mills Brothers track of "Dinah".

She was just so cute, and being the same age, was she my favourite film star in the early 'Thirties? - *But definally!*

Thank you chaps for all your hard work, not just for the magazine but for all things Bing!

Ian B. Lawrence, Northfleet, Kent, UK

I recently bought the book "George Hurrell's Hollywood". On page 199, which is about Joan Crawford, quote:

"She was the most serious," said Hurrell. "She relished a full day's shooting, she'd put Bing Crosby records on."

"I loved torch songs," said Crawford. "I was always sad listening to Bing Crosby's records."

"Once when I was photographing her on the set of a picture," recalled Hurrell, "we had to stop so she could listen to a Bing Crosby broadcast. There was no radio on the set, so her limousine was wheeled in. Joan tuned in the program on the car's radio and sat and listened until it was over."

Pat Shields, by email from Universal City, California, USA

Last night I was reading an article about the actor/singer/entrepreneur Jamie Foxx ("RAY"). It mentioned that there are only two people who have ever had an Academy Award AND a #1 pop record. Jamie and Bing Crosby! I thought that was interesting, and perhaps you will too!

Ian Patience, Woodford Green, Essex, UK

Thank you so much for sending me the Bing Screen Legends DVD set. I am delighted with it and have been having my own "Bing Season"! As you stated the quality is superb—I had never seen *Double or Nothing* and *Waikiki Wedding* only in a very dim version on a "pirate" VHS tape. I thoroughly enjoyed all the films but *If I Had My Way* still remains my favourite. It is tailor-made for Bing and he still had that wonderful 30s voice which to my mind has never been bettered by any popular singer. I think it is remarkable that there is still a first class magazine dedicated to him while others have fallen by the wayside (with the exception of Frank Sinatra). It says a lot for the quality of Bing the artist and man and also the dedication and hard work of the many devotees through the years.

The present officers are to be congratulated for keeping the flag flying and their dedication is much appreciated.

Geoff Vizard, Wigan, Greater Manchester, UK

...I'd like to tell you that one of the presents that one of my daughters gave to me, is the book, "Me and Uncle Bing", by Carolyn Schneider, and I am enjoying reading it. It is nice to get a little bit of personal knowledge about someone you admire, as much as I do with Bing, and of course, there are lots of photos we have never seen before.

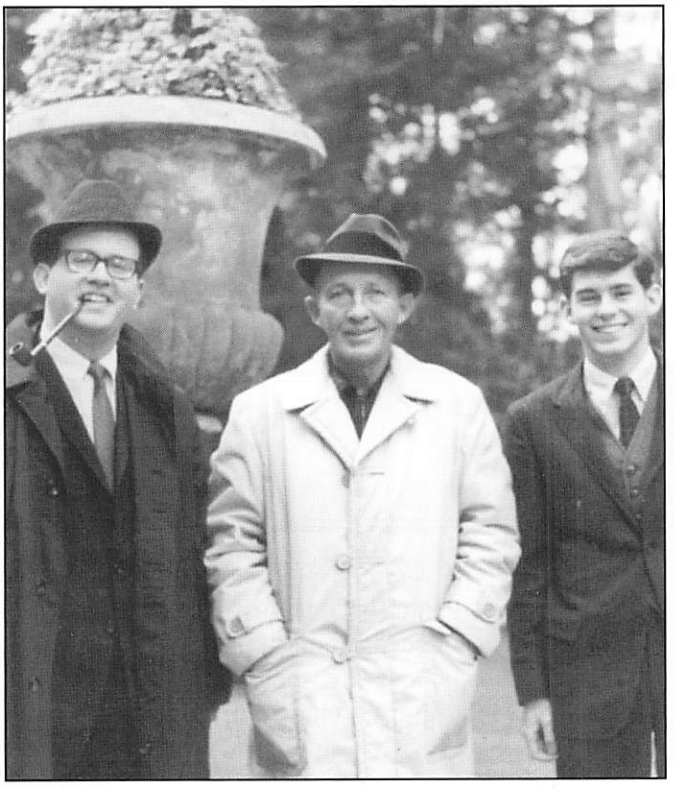
When my daughters were young, the voice they heard more than any other was Bing Crosby, and I used to refer to him as Uncle Bing for them. I talked about him incessantly, and during one meal, my daughter Susan asked, "Dad, is Bing Crosby God," which shook me really, so I answered, "No love he isn't, but you would think so the way I talk about him!"

Well Michael, I thank you and all the other contributors for all the time and hard work that you put into the International Club Crosby, and of course, we would have nothing, without all you wonderful people, Many thanks again!

Monsignor Bob Murphy, by email from St. Bridget Parish in Pleasant Hill, Missouri, USA, to Greg Van Beek

I don't know how newsworthy these are or whether or not the readers of BING might find them interesting but thought I would pass them on:

Rancho Santa Fe Country Club is celebrating the very first Crosby Pro-Am which, as you know, was always held there before moving to Pebble Beach. My friend Ken Bien, is the former President of the Club and the head of the PGA Southern California Golf Association. He is the one I took to meet Bing and Kathryn on New Year's Day 1969. Ken wanted the picture Kathryn took of Bing and Ken and me on that morning. It will be part of the "Bing Stories" that will be told at the 75th Anniversary Celebration.



Father Bob (left) with Bing and Ken Bien.

2) There is a show currently playing at one of the theaters here in Kansas City entitled "Bing and Bob: Hollywood's Iconic Duo". Interestingly enough the picture of Bob Hope is one with a pipe in his mouth. I'm not sure I've seen that before. The picture of Bing also is one with a pipe in his mouth as per normal.

3) On November 22, 2013 while most newspapers had an article on the front page about the anniversary of President Kennedy's assassination, the Kansas City Star had a story about the Auto Show in Kansas City going on and not canceling on that day. There was a large photo of Bob Crosby crowning the Queen of the Auto Show on Nov. 22, 1963. The article went on to talk about Bob Crosby and his brother Bing. It mentioned that Bob Crosby was touring in a show called "The Big Band Cavalcade" which showcased other Big Band Stars such as Frankie Carle and Harry James. I remember that Bing wrote me about the show and encouraged me to see it which I did.

At any rate, I pass these on for what their worth. Keep up the good work!

(Editor: Bob subsequently sent me a copy of an email from his friend Ken Bien which gave more details of the Rancho Santa Fe celebration on June 7.

The Crosby dinner at Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club was last evening with about 150 attending. Chris Crosby, Bob Crosby's son, and a singer attended and sang a number of Crosby favorites. I sat with Nathaniel Crosby and he brought 2 of his 4 children (both in their early 20's) from Florida where he lives. Chris Crosby's sister also attended. Those were all of the Crosby clan that attended. Nathaniel said Kathryn currently lives in their childhood home that we visited in Hillsboro. I think she still has a ranch in the Reno area. It was a fun event that benefited a scholarship fund in Rancho.)

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

Many thanks for another interesting issue. It made me recall some Australian 'connections':

Alistair Cooke's tribute to Bing was broadcast on ABC Radio's national network after Cooke's death in 2004.

Keith Parkinson's article on *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's* was especially interesting. Australian box office revenues are not available but *Going My Way* must have fared much better here. It ran for 21 weeks at Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre (capacity 1389 patrons) and 10 weeks at Melbourne's State Theatre (3339, Australia's largest cinema) compared with *The Bells of St. Mary's* first runs of 8 weeks at Sydney's Regent (2233) and 6 weeks at Melbourne's Esquire (1576). Both movies were revived at city cinemas in later years and in 1953 *Going My Way* was revived at eighteen suburban cinemas in Melbourne, for one week at each venue.

I enjoyed reading about John Newton's history as a collector and Paul Mason's reference to the importance of matrix numbers to collectors. When the Australian Columbia 78 (label number DO1091) with 'Learn to Croon' and 'Moonstruck' was pressed here in March 1934 the label of 'Learn to Croon' recorded the matrix number as B779 but B793 was impressed on the shellac. The long delay in its release was caused by the fact that Brunswick (Australia) went out of business in 1931 and none of Bing's Brunswick recordings were pressed here in 1932 or 1933.

The Panachord and Embassy discs to which Paul Mason refers were released here in 1931. The non-Crosby sides of the Panachords were 'As Long As You're There' (P11981) and 'Nevertheless' (P11982), both attributed to Hervy Powell but almost certainly by Seger Ellis who had recorded them for US Brunswick. Apparently Brunswick (Australia) had plans to release an excerpt from 'Gems from George White's Scandals' and some years ago a CD set produced here included 'Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries' by Bing, the Boswell Sisters and the Mills Brothers.

I've looked at Paul Mason's article in BING again and realised that his reference to matrix number 6140 on the Panachord record of 'I Found a Million Dollar Baby' (Owen Cornell) is the label number of the US Brunswick on which it was released and the 'B' on the label is, I suppose, the take of that recording. (My reference is Wig Wiggins' discography dated 2001.)

Incidentally, Paul notes that the reverse side of the Arthur Beaumont Embassy record E144 which is labelled The Broadway Orchestra's 'How the Time Can

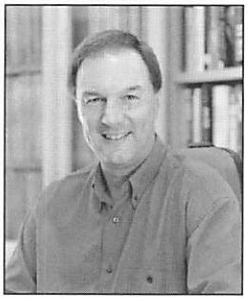
Fly' is actually Smith Ballew with a Brunswick studio orchestra matrix M12204. According to my research notes, an article in *The Crosby Voice* no. 31 (Feb. 1985) said that it was Loring (Red) Nichols and His Orchestra, (Matrix no. E36857 – recorded June 11, 1931). I no longer have that publication but I suspect that the author of the article was Gordon Wall using the nom-de-plume of Bill Brill.

Roger Schore, by email to Greg Van Beek from New York, USA

Just received the August 2014 issue of *Downbeat* which announced on the cover Bing's entrance into the "Hall of Fame." Apparently, he was voted in by the Veterans Committee as was Dinah Washington. The issue includes a nice two page appreciation from writer John McDonough which stresses Bing's jazz roots as well as his indebtedness to Louis Armstrong.

CROSBYANA

Ken Crossland takes a look at all things Bing

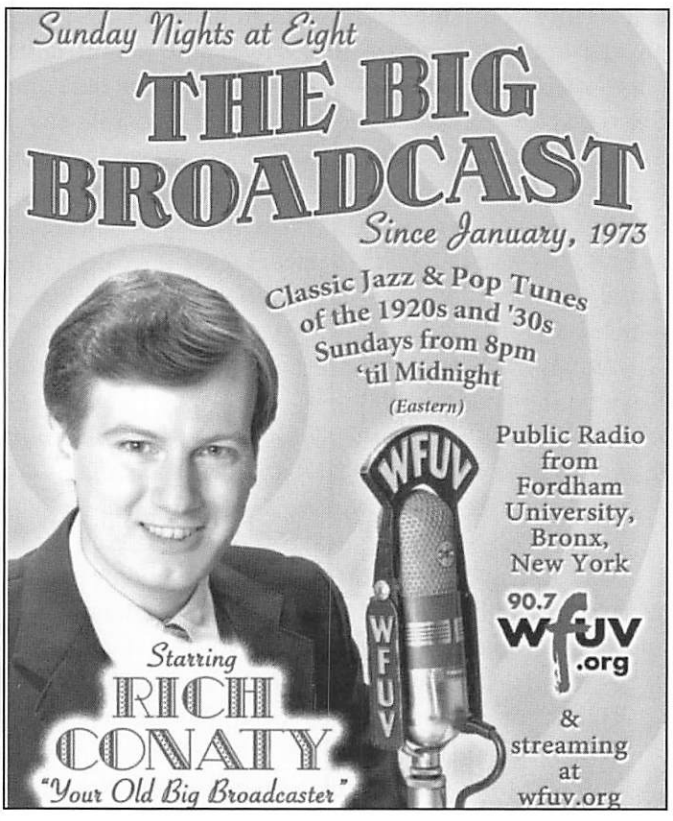


2014, it seems, is a year of anniversaries. The headline events of course are all around the carnage of war - the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 1, the 75th anniversary of WW2, the 70th anniversary of D-Day; the list goes on. But it's also a year of some special anniversaries for me too. October will see the centenary of my father's birth in 1914, whilst April just gone saw my own 60th birthday arrive and depart at a frightening speed. More to the point, 2014 also marks the 50th anniversary of my first awareness of Bing as a maker of records.

1964 saw the arrival of a record player in my home for the first time, or at least the first time during my lifetime. Both of my parents were lifelong lovers of dancing, music, and Bing in particular. Indeed my mother still recalls the movie posters she had on her bedroom wall at the time of her sixteenth birthday in 1934. Now, 80 years later and approaching 96, she wonders if can lay claim to being Bing's longest lived and most enduring fan. If you know of another contender - indeed if you <u>are</u> another contender, let us know.

My father had been a collector of 78s before and during the war but they had disappeared along with his wind-up gramophone in the postwar years. So he was as enthusiastic about the arrival of our portable disc player as I was. My first records were the ones that any kid of 10 would buy, mainly the Beatles and the other hits of the day, but my awareness of Bing on record came that Christmas when I went looking for a record by my mum's favourite singer as a Christmas present. I found only two in the local record store, "Silent Night/Adeste Fideles" and "White Christmas/Let's Start the New Year Right". I was of course familiar with "Silent Night" but I had never heard of "White Christmas" so it was the carol not the classic that I plumped for.

Soon, I was buying Crosby records for my own consumption and I remember so well the serendipitous ignorance of those years. Almost straight away I was drawn to the then contemporary Crosby voice. Tracks from *The Great Country Hits* featured regularly on BBC radio but others that sounded similarly new were conspicuous by their absence in the shops. One helpful store owner recognised that my listening and his commercial interests coincided and went to great lengths to secure for me some of the Brunswick LPs that were beginning to suffer the dreadful fate of catalogue deletion. When I asked him about the more modern recordings, he scratched his head and said yes, he did recall that there had been several "new" albums by Bing on the Reprise label "not that long ago". His memory seemed vindicated when he came up with a copy of *Return to Paradise Islands* and I eagerly awaited more. It was only at my first ICC gathering at Michael Crampton's home in the autumn of 1969 that the then secretary, Reg Bristo, dispelled the myth and told me that they didn't exist.

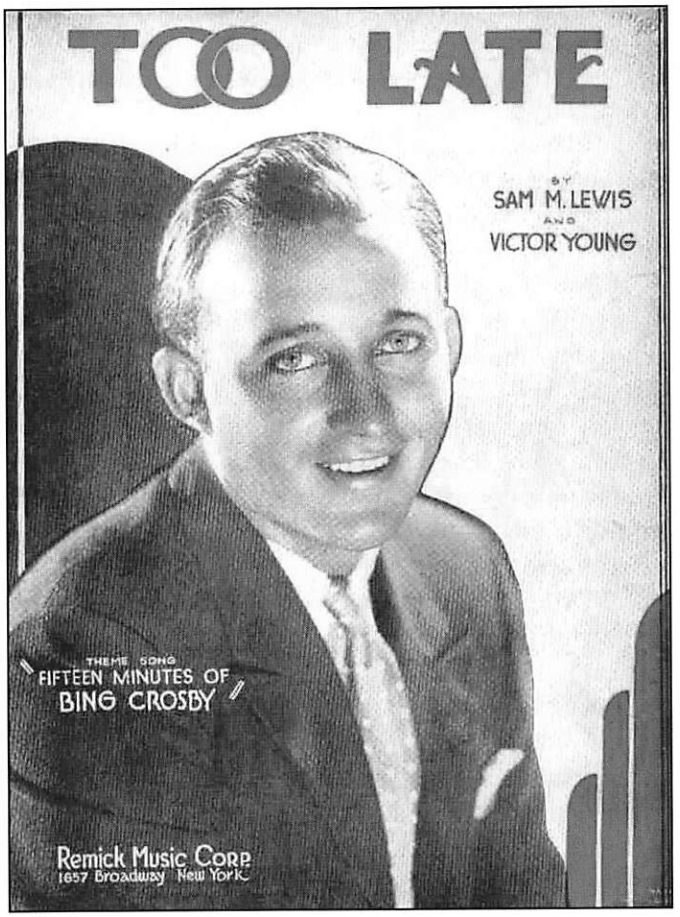


Until then, I had pursued my fledgling interest in Bing in a world of confusion and bewilderment but boy, was it fun. Then, that Sunday, I came into contact with a group of people who had collected Bing's records back since the early Thirties and what's more, had the analytical recollections of a collector rather than anecdotal fan-based recall of my parents. It was fascinating to listen to their stories of Bing's impact on the music scene in the early Thirties, which even then, was almost 40 years ago. I always thought that the great advantage of coming late to a singer's career was that the entire history was laid out before you and especially in the digital age, instantly available. What's missing of course is the context. I am old enough to remember what it was like when the Beatles hit the music scene in the Sixties and I would have loved to have lived through that same experience with Bing. Talking to those who gathered in Michael's living room all those years ago was the next best thing.

Until now. Finally, I have the chance to experience it myself via the digital airwaves from New York every Sunday evening between 8.00pm and midnight, local time. The programme is *The Big Broadcast* on station WFUV, aired from New York's Fordham University. It's been on the air for over 40 years, presented all that time by Rich Conaty. I have never met him although we have corresponded and if ever I had a kindred spirit, it's him. He started the show when he was a student at the University aged 19 and like me, he hits his 60th this year. He briefly took the show to a commercial station but it was never going to work. Conaty is an enthusiast. His show, he says, is "for the old and the old-at-heart". His presentation is unpolished - discs that refuse to start, facts that he researches all week but then suddenly decides mid-way through his delivery cannot possibly be correct. But it all adds to the charm of the show, living proof that that enthusiasm is catching.

All the stuff he plays is pre-WW2 and mostly Twenties and early Thirties. In those four hours each week, I travel back in time. I hear songs that I have long thought of as standards being played on records made within weeks of them of having been written. I hear songs that for almost 50 years I have associated in my head with Bing and no-one else, now being sung by other artists. Take for example, "Too Late", a Victor Young-Sam Lewis composition that briefly served as Bing's theme tune on the *Presenting Fifteen Minutes with Bing Crosby* CBS radio shows in 1931, before being usurped by "Blue of the Night". Now, from Conaty, I hear it sung by Ruth Etting, arguably better than the Crosby rendition. And what's more, I now have a Ruth Etting playlist on my iPod.

But instances of anything being better than Bing are few and far between. Conaty's playlist is littered with stilted vocals sung by effeminate sounding tenors who demonstrate clearly why vocalists *per se* were frowned upon. Then, at least four or five times in every show, Conaty says "And here's Bing". Always just Bing. The Crosby is superfluous, just as it was for all the years that Bing was alive and some beyond. There and then, you suddenly know what it was like to have been around all those years ago, when that magical baritone voice hit the world of music like a tsunami hits the shore. "Always remember," says Conaty at the end of each show "rhythm saved the world". Not just rhythm. It was also a man called Bing.



Ken Crossland

The Bing Crosby 1973 BBC Radio Biography

In 1973 BBC Radio Two broadcast a weekly fourteen-part series of programmes detailing Bing Crosby's life story as told by Bing himself plus scores of his friends, acquaintances and fellow stars. Here, some forty years on, the series producer, Brian Willey, gives us an exclusive account of how the series was created.

"Hi Bing – I'm the guy from the BBC." I was just one of some 1,500 people all wanting to greet him – and there was a momentary gap in the crowd of reporters, photographers and autograph hunters. I poked my head through that gap and shouted out the shortest sentence of

introduction I could manage. Bing turned and looked for the source of the voice. "Well hello there – glad to know you." Despite the bobbing heads and general hubbub we somehow managed a brief conversation of introduction and then – with the words "Be seeing you" – the gap closed and Bing was engulfed once more.

The occasion, on November 17th 1972, was a spectacular presentation in the Hollywood Palladium. Bing, commemorating 30 years involvement with the American Armed Forces Radio Service, was to be presented with their trophy and I was just one of those 1,500 folk invited to lunch and look up at the stars on the top table. So went my first ever meeting with 'The Old Groaner'. He knew that I was due to arrive, for he, along with about 200 of his friends and acquaintances, had received a letter from me seeking permission to ask questions about his life story. Bing had agreed – and the Hollywood event offered a good chance for me to say hello.

I had grown up with the Crosby sound, for his Brunswick 78s abounded in my parents' home. As a youngster, the verse and chorus of 'Pennies from Heaven' was my favourite song. Naturally I never thought then that I would ever meet Bing face to face, but now, some 35 years on, here I was as a BBC Radio Producer commissioned to gather material for a definitive biography and I had flown to Los Angeles especially to meet him.

His friends and fellow stars were to be dealt with first, which led me to meeting and interviewing an amazing collection of rare people, including the Andrews Sisters, Fred Astaire, George Burns, Frank Capra, Rosemary Clooney, Jerry Colonna, Princess Grace, Phil Harris, Al Rinker, John Scott Trotter, Rudy Vallee and many scores more. Even a phone call to Irving Berlin was arranged but, although he talked to me, he sadly refused to be recorded owing to the deteriorating condition of his voice.

The main interviews with Bing himself were reserved to take place in January 1973. By then he would be on the Monterey Peninsula hosting his Pro-Am Golf Tournament on the cliffside fairways and greens that slope to the sea at Pebble Beach, Carmel, California – and therefore captive in one location for a while.

A modest apartment in Cypress Point Golf Clubhouse was the setting for the marathon interviews. "Hi, make yourself at home – I'll be right with you," he said, and then seated beside a crackling log fire, he busied himself stoking up his pipe before the long and exacting probe into his memory bank. I took him at his word for a few minutes and wandered out onto the balcony. Fairways lined with pines and cypress trees greeted my gaze and beyond, the Pacific Ocean. Mrs Kathryn Crosby joined me in admiring this breathtaking view. "I saw three whales spouting yesterday," she informed me.

"They migrate at this time of the year and it is such fun to watch out for them." I would have quite liked to stay out there with her and watch but my really big fish was ready to talk.

Bing, amidst a cloud of smoke, began. He talked casually, sometimes with the pipe clenched between his teeth, and had no difficulty in recalling events of the past. Some of the questions were searching, but nothing fazed him.

"Bing and Brian Willey at Pebble Beach.

Suddenly the phone rang. There was an appointment for him to keep. We had been talking for two whole hours. "Haven't got any more time today – see you for a couple of hours tomorrow though – how about ten in the morning?" With a handshake and a smile he was off out onto the greens to host his galaxy of golfers.

He wasn't there exactly at ten the following day. An unscheduled date with a TV camera crew had got him out at eight-thirty that morning. "Phew, I've only got to sit and talk to you haven't I?" he said when he finally appeared. "Let's get started, I've only got till midday. Where did we get to yesterday?" Out poured the smoke from the pipe and we were off again.

A few days later I realized there were a couple more things I needed to know about and phoned him for a brief meeting. "Tomorrow morning, make it early, say eight o'clock, for the day is going to be busy." I arrived just before time and, as Bing was not yet there, I decided I would like an impromptu photo of him and got my camera ready.

When he entered the room he saw what I was about to do, held up his hand and pointed frantically at his head. "Oh no, not without my rug on – you can catch me later when I am outside." It was then I realized that, having never seen a picture of him without hair or a hat, it was a grossly unwelcome action to take a picture at this informal occasion He told me he avoided wearing a hairpiece if at all possible – a hat was so much more convenient. I was amused by the term 'rug', for I recalled reading somewhere that he used to refer to his

toupee as a 'divot' – a great term for a golfer to use. I meekly packed up my camera, asked my questions, recorded the answers, and then left him to prepare for the active day ahead.

I did get my snapshot later. Once outside he turned and waved to me, and the photo I took was later featured on the LP sleeve of MGM 2353 084 – 'The Special Magic of Bing and Satchmo' – a re-issue of some 1960 tracks backed by Billy May.

'The best-loved entertainer in the world' was a label once stuck on Bing – and I can fully understand it. He was a charming guy: relaxed, unassuming and a real pleasure to meet because, to him, everyone was someone. He had delighted my generation and the generation before me, and surely his voice and what he meant to the world of entertainment will continue to delight future generations.

He invited me to the TV studios for his 1972 Christmas Special. His whole family took part and while he sang some songs his wife and kids threw plastic snowballs at him. It was all great fun.

My resulting radio programmes – fourteen of them, each of one hour duration – were first broadcast on BBC Radio Two in mid-1973, with Douglas Fairbanks Jnr. guiding the listener through each show. BBC Transcription Service recorded them onto LPs which were made available to many radio stations around the world – and a set of them was presented to Bing's memorabilia archive at Gonzaga University.

I like to think I played a small part in resurrecting Bing's recording career and subsequent stage appearances. In a casual conversation one day I told him that, with the amount of material I was gathering, this would be a mammoth series – and what a delight it would be to close with a new recording. "Aw, nobody wants to hear me sing anymore." was his reply.

My next appointment that day was with Sonny Burke, one of Bing's former record producers. I mentioned my conversation to him and Bing's response to the idea. "Is that what he reckons?" said Sonny; "He was just being modest. Leave it to me." Well, I heard nothing more and, with all the editing done, the last show was set for transmission on the final Sunday afternoon. On the morning before that broadcast my bedside phone rang at around 6 a.m. "Who the hell can that be at this time?" I grumbled – but fortunately I did answer it. It was a representative from Pye Records, who told me he was at Heathrow Airport having just flown in from L.A. with a tape that I had been promised. Sonny Burke had been true to his word, got two new songs for Bing – 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree' and 'It's Not Where You Start, It's Where You Finish' – and persuaded him to record once more.

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DAYBREAK RECORDS
DAS 402
℗ 1973
DAS 402-B
2.40
Campbell-Connelly
IT'S NOT WHERE YOU START
(Coleman, Fields)
BING CROSBY
Arranged & Conducted by Billy Byers
MANUFACTURED AND DISTRIBUTED BY PYE RECORDS ATV HOUSE, GT. CUMBERLAND PLACE, W.1.

Naturally I was up and out like a shot to collect it – but at the same time rather bothered about how they could be used. The final programme was ready for broadcast and getting the new record into it was not simple. My first call was to Doug Fairbanks – fervently hoping that he was still in London. Luckily he was, and available to come to a studio. A call to my recording engineer, for urgent edits were required. Then to book an editing suite and studio, collect the programme tapes from the library, make space for the introductory announcements from Fairbanks, insert the songs and then reassemble. I found it impossible to make enough space for both tracks so I chose 'It's Not Where You Start' – it seemed a more appropriate lyric. And so the job was complete.

The broadcast was heard by an independent record producer named Ken Barnes, who thought, "If Bing can still sing like that, I want to make an album with him." That ambition came to fruition and the rest is history.

The Bing Crosby radio series was repeated during late 1974 and again in 1975 and, in the late summer of that year he and the family were in London and I was able to persuade him to record an August Bank Holiday Special for Radio Two – just Bing in conversation with me plus a pile of his favourite records. When the recording was complete he was off on a date with a golf course.

In October 1976 I purloined some extracts from the series and, with Bob Hope as host, made a one-hour special titled 'Solid Gold Bing' to commemorate Bing's 50th anniversary in the record business. The late autumn of 1978 featured the series yet again, but this time as a fitting tribute to the passing of a never-to-be-forgotten legend.

For me, getting to know him was a huge highlight of my life.

Brian Willey

(Editor: Our sincere thanks to Brian for his most interesting article. We owe him a huge debt for his involvement with Bing.

Brian joined the BBC Engineering Department in 1944. Appointed a Radio Producer in 1960 he retired from the BBC in 1987 after 43 years service. Apart from his work with our man, he produced memorable radio programmes with Gracie Fields, The Beatles, The Who, and many public concerts – one of which starred Rosemary Clooney in London's Royal Festival Hall. He has been Vice-Chairman of the Songwriters' Guild of Great Britain and the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA); a Director of the Performing Right Society; Chairman of the Ivor Novello Awards Committee and, currently, Deputy Chairman of the PRS Members' Benevolent Fund with which he recently celebrated 30 years service.

In an email exchange with Brian, I asked him about Charles Thompson's involvement in the BING radio series and he replied:

"Regarding Charles Thompson, he was my scriptwriter for the series and we travelled together sharing the interview schedule on a daily basis. In most cases it was - him in one direction and me in another. In the case of Bing, it was a combined effort and his book was a result of the whole programme experience - an advantage not to be missed. We first met when I was appointed editor of the daily Jimmy Young Show and he was already in harness there as a researcher. Thus I soon became fully aware of his capabilities and feel I could not have made a better choice for the tasks ahead. There was no need for him to return to the States at a later date - all for the book was gathered during the programme research."

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Crosby films seen on TV since last time include:

Going Hollywood	TCM
High Society	TCM
High Time	FXM
Let's Make Love	FXM
Man on Fire	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
Pennies from Heaven	TCM
Road to Bali	TCM
Robin and the 7 Hoods	TCM
The Joker Is Wild	TCM
The Princess and the Pirate	TCM

TCM gave us a Crosby bonanza on May 2 to (almost) tie in with the anniversary of Bing's birth when they showed five of his films and they have shown other films since. Thank goodness for them otherwise it would be a rather bleak scene. Turner Classic Movies also repeated the Crosby interview from *The Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson* in June.

On May 16, Barbara Walters' marvelous "Her Story" on ABC-TV was the most-watched program that night. The pioneering newswoman drew 9.3 million with the two-hour portrait, which aired on the day she retired from regular television. Viewers were treated to a huge chunk of TV history as Walters explained her deft interviewing style, her landmark career and her famous interviews. The most memorable clips featured Bing (of course), John Wayne, the Shah of Iran, Sean Connery, Monica Lewinsky, Mike Tyson and Robin Givens.

USA & Canadian Radio

The excellent 12-part **Bing's Basement** shows have continued on the *SiriusXM* 40s on 4 channel. Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Arne Fogel have put these together very well indeed by imaginatively finding songs to fit their topic each time.

The theme for the March broadcast was "A Little Bit of Irish" to tie in with St. Patrick's Day and the songs heard were as follows. Commercial recordings unless stated.

St. Patrick's Day Parade – Chat about St. Patrick's Day food (Bing Crosby Show, Mar. 16, 1955) – Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Lo-Ral (Crosby-Clooney Show, Mar. 17, 1960) – With My Shillelagh under My Arm – Top O' the Morning (Chesterfield, Sept. 21, 1949) – Did Your Mother Come from Ireland? (KMH, Mar.19, 1942) – Who Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder (alternate take) – My Girl's an Irish Girl – Eileen – Rosaleen – I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen (alternate) – Dear Old Donegal

(KMH, Mar. 14, 1946) – Galway Bay – Isle of Innisfree (A Little Bit of Irish, Mar. 14, 1967) – McNamara's Band (KMH, Mar. 15, 1945) – Oh! 'Tis Sweet to Think (with Ann Blyth) – Danny Boy – When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (KMH, Mar. 14, 1940) – Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan (Chesterfield, Mar. 12, 1952) – Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (Joey Bishop Show, Oct. 25, 1967)

It was particularly pleasing to hear the quality of the songs used from the *Kraft Music Hall* as they were several generations better than my copies. The final item was of course the occasion when Bing sang to Regis Philbin as described in Greg Van Beek's article in our last issue.

On April 19, the show was titled "Bing in Spokane" and it leaned heavily on the songs Bing recorded there with Buddy Cole in the mid-1950s for his radio show. The KMH broadcast of October 21, 1937 and the Philco show of October 20, 1948 both came from Spokane but these were not used. The highlights for the dedicated Crosby fan were the songs by Lindsay Crosby, which had Bing joining in now and again, as these are very rare. It was good to hear Bing's address as he opened the Crosby Library in 1957. This may be sacrilege but am I alone in finding some of Bing's chats from his 1954-56 radio shows rather boring? The items used were:

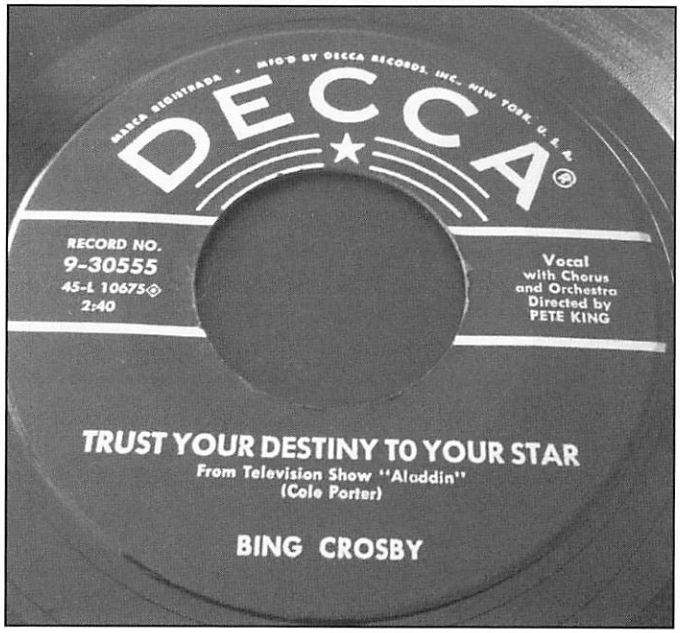
Swanee – Chat about boyhood in Spokane – It's All Right with Me – Chat about Hayden Lake - What D'ye Mean You Lost Yer Dog? (a capella, from The Bing Crosby Show, Sept. 23, 1955) – Lullaby of Broadway – Heart - What D'ye Mean You Lost Yer Dog? (extract from original version by Edward Meeker) – Rock Around the Clock (Lindsay Crosby and Bing) – Allegheny Moon (Lindsay Crosby and Bing) – Big D (Lindsay Crosby and Bing) – Avalon – Chinatown – Chicago – Gonzaga Men (Philco Apr. 13, 1949) – Down the Old Ox Road (with Peggy Lee – Philco Apr. 13, 1949) – Now You Has Jazz (with Louis Armstrong – Edsel Show) – Address to Gonzaga, Nov. 3, 1957

Bing's Basement on May 17 was a celebration of the most successful composer – performer collaboration of all time! That between Bing and Irving Berlin. An eclectic mixture of songs was put together and we heard:

Sunshine (1928) – Bing talks about Berlin and George M. Cohan- Puttin' on the Ritz – There's No Business Like Show Business (with Dick Haymes and the Andrews Sisters) – Extract from Arne's interview with Bing (April 1977) – Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon (KMH April 28, 1938) – When That Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam' (KMH July 7, 1938) – Heatwave (1956) - The Little Things in Life (1930) – Cheek to Cheek (with Buddy Cole) – You're Just in Love (with Rosemary Clooney, December 6, 1953) – Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) – Bing talks about Berlin (1973) – Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep (with Buddy Cole) – But Where Are You (KMH March 12, 1936) – This Is a Great Country – When I Leave the World Behind – Medley from *Holiday Inn* (KMH December 14, 1944) – Berlin talking about "White Christmas" – Bing talking about "White Christmas" – Oh, How I Hate to Get up in the Morning (Irving Berlin – Philco May 7, 1947).

The June 21 ***Basement*** show looked at Bing and Cole Porter and the songs selected to highlight the connection were:

I'm In Love Again – Let's Do It (W401561) – I Never Realized – At Long Last Love (KMH, Nov. 10, 1938) – Don't Fence Me In (with Andrews Sisters – KMH, Jan. 25, 1945) – I've Got You under My Skin – Trust Your Destiny to a Star – Begin the Beguine (GE, Jun. 18, 1953) – I Love Paris (GE, Oct. 11, 1953) – Night and Day (GE, Jun. 25, 1953) – From This Moment On (with Buddy Cole) – I Love You Samantha – True Love (with Grace Kelly) – I Get a Kick out of You (with Buddy Cole) – *Anything Goes* medley (KMH, Mar. 8, 1945) – Special recording for Chris Dunphy testimonial dinner (Mar. 17, 1966)



This was the last of the *Bing's Basement* series but the good news is that all 12 programs are to be repeated by Sirius over the coming twelve months.

Arne Fogel's own Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is still being aired at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota, and it can be picked up internationally, at http://jazz88.mpls.k12.mn.us/ . As usual, we can give an example: Arne's April 5th broadcast was titled "Bing Sings: Songs by Richard Rodgers" and the songs played were:

Bali Ha'i - Manhattan - The Blue Room - Do I Hear You Saying - There's Music in You - Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' (with Trudy Erwin)

PLUS:

On the Very First Day of the Year - The Day After Forever - Gentle on My Mind - I Guess It Had to Be That Way - Robins and Roses - Come Rain or Come Shine - The Kiss in Your Eyes - I'm Wingin' Home - Lily of Laguna (with Mary Martin)

Greg Van Beek has been continuing his weekly radio series *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB and this is on for an hour each Saturday starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET) and it always has a "Bing Sings" segment. On May 3, he broadcast his annual *Bing Crosby Birthday Bash* playing the following songs:

Where or When (1960 - enhanced) - But Beautiful - On the Sentimental Side - The Umbrella Man – Singin' in the Rain (Chesterfield) - You Don't Have To Know The Language (with the Andrews Sisters) - The Road to Bali (with Bob Hope) - Little Angel - Don't Be a Do-Badder -

A Little Love and Understanding - Let's Take the Long Way Home - Did You Ever See a Dream Walking? - A Kiss to Build a Dream On - Now You Has Jazz (with Louis Armstrong, from Edsel Show) - Mountain Greenery – Sunflower (1963) - There's Nothing That I Haven't Sung About (1977)

You can tune in online at the www.1420thebreeze.com website or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to www.1420thebreeze.com and clicking on the 'audio archives' link.

We have previously mentioned that KEZW and the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado present the ***Star Spangled Radio Hour*** every Saturday night at 6pm. Hosts Rick Crandall and Dennis Spragg introduce live big band radio broadcasts from the 30s and 40s each week that likely haven't been heard since they originally aired. On April 5, the entire *Kraft Music Hall* show from May 4, 1944 was aired and Bing's guests were Gene Kelly and Marilyn Maxwell.

Ken Crossland has already mentioned **Rich Conaty's** long-running ***"The Big Broadcast"*** show from New York on WFUV. Rich puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s which of course includes Bing. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight (ET) and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

Member **Croft O'Toole** reminds us that the *Golden Age of Radio* is alive and well in Connecticut. For the past 13 years on WECS-FM (90.1), Christine Guarnieri, Professional Advisor at Eastern Connecticut State University, has been producing a six-hour classic radio show on Saturday nights. Via broadcast and WECS-FM's streaming audio Internet feed, Guarnieri's ***"Chatterbox Old Time Radio"*** program has developed a following of radio buffs across Connecticut and the nation. On her March 15 program, which tied in with the imminent St. Patrick's Day, Christine broadcast a complete Crosby-Clooney show which had Bing singing two Irish songs and she also included a further ten Irish songs by the Groaner from his commercial recordings. Chatterbox is on from 6 p.m. to midnight every Saturday on WECS-FM and on the Internet at http://www.wecsradio.com/stream/ and Mr. Crosby is featured frequently.

TV highlights - UK

Films seen since our last issue was prepared were:

Holiday Inn	Sky Movies
Let's Make Love	Sky DramaRom
Rear Window	BBC2
Road to Bali	TCM
The Country Girl	Sky Greats
The Greatest Show on Earth	Film4

Some of you may remember the 17-part series from the 1970s called "All You Need Is Love" and this was repeated on Sky Arts1 starting in March. Bing appeared briefly in two of the episodes talking about the early days of his career with Paul Whiteman and also about song pluggers.

Sky Arts2 replayed the "Great Entertainers - The Show Stoppers" in March and June and this starts off with Bing singing "Pennies from Heaven" from his February 15, 1964 TV show. Others featured included Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee and Eddie Fisher but unfortunately most of the clips were of poorish quality. The same channel continues to show "The Legendary Bing Crosby" programme regularly too.

A Bob Hope show from May 24, 1955 popped up on a channel called *FilmonTv* and whilst not a particularly good show nor of great quality, it was interesting to see Bing in a sketch with Bob. Pity Der Bingle didn't sing though.

Bert Bishop spotted something in the new BBC quiz show, *All About Two* [i.e. BBC2] and this was a very short clip of Joan Bakewell interviewing Bing in her erstwhile programme *Late Night Line Up*. This dated from July 6, 1965.

UK radio

The National Presenters on BBC Radio2

As we feared, the nationally networked Radio2 is becoming a Crosby wasteland with Bing being very rarely heard.

Desmond Carrington's Friday night show has played him only twice in four months and the songs were "Spring, Spring, Spring (with Fred Astaire) and "Far Away Places".

Don Black, the multi award-winning lyricist, whose show I praised last time, disappeared from the schedules almost as soon as I mentioned him but he came back in June and was soon playing "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" by Bing. During his absence, his place last thing on Sunday nights was taken for a while by Moira Stuart. Moira played our kind of music but not one Crosby record was heard during her spell at the microphone

Clare Teal's show on Sunday nights had only played one Crosby song – "Don't Fence Me In" – until June 8 when thanks to some prodding by member **Colin Stewart**, she played "Easter Parade" with Anne Shelton and "I'll Be Seeing You". This came about because Colin wrote to Clare as follows:

> *Your "D Day" special this Sunday has to include one or more numbers from Bing Crosby. He was after all the most popular entertainer on both sides of the Atlantic during the war, raised millions of dollars in war bonds with his radio shows, sang to the troops in the UK bases and on BBC shows (perhaps you can find the one with Anne Shelton) and in the campaigns of the armies across Europe after D Day. There are so many to choose from which your production team can find for you but one poignant song I remember Russell Davies playing is called "Hello Mom", as from a soldier writing home - with that lovely line "I'm sorry I couldn't call collect" (i.e reverse the phone charge). I hope you can find it and look forward to hearing that great voice which was so much part of wartime.*

Well done, Colin. You have set us a good example.

Elaine Paige on Sunday still plays an occasional song from the Groaner and she used "True Love" twice plus "Ding, Dong, The Witch Is Dead" and "The Best Things in Life Are Free" during the four month period

under review.

Mark Spry reports that on Radio 4's *Archive Hour* on April 19, there were a couple of clips of Bing's nephew Howard Crosby talking about his uncle using Shannon airport in Ireland. Howard was then heard singing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling".

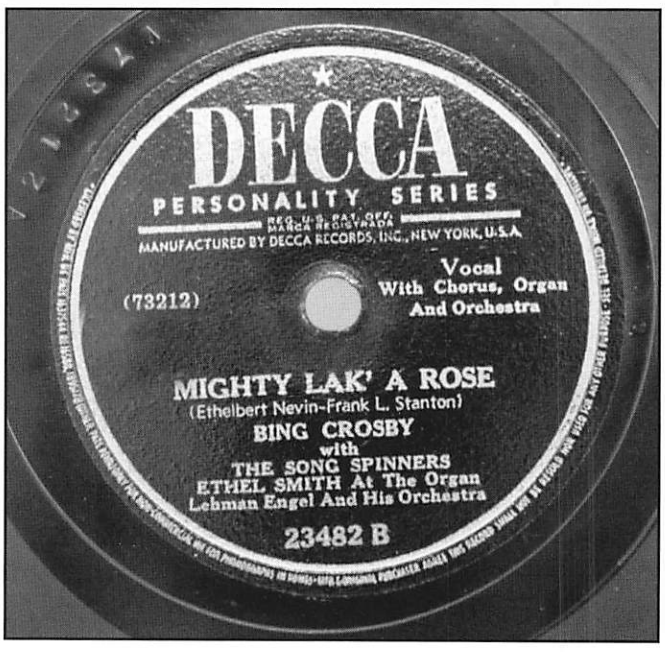
So thank goodness for the local radio people and thank you to our members who keep writing in with requests.

The local radio presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) still features Bing on her Saturday night shows (10pm-midnight). In the four months to the end of June, Anne played a total of 37 Crosby recordings. Songs selected went from "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?" to "Come Share the Wine". Among the rarer songs heard were "The Music of Home" and "Why Can't You Behave".

She continues to welcome requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk* so email her if you want to hear lots of Bing on the radio. There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast.

Bill and Angela Rennells on their *Harmony Nights* broadcast had a steady batch of requests for Bing and in all they played 27 Crosby songs in the period. Our stalwarts Stan White (ten requests) and Ian Lawrence (four requests) made sure that Der Bingle was not overlooked. Nice to hear some of the less common songs such as "The Four Winds and the Seven Seas", "Mighty Lak' a Rose", "Oh! You Crazy Moon" and "Answer Me". Bill and Angela mounted a nice birthday tribute to Bing as well.



Harmony Nights is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. This show also has a "Listen Again" option. Email Bill and Angela with your Bing requests at *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk.*

"The Late Paul Barnes", the two-hour big band and jazz oriented bash hosted by **Paul Barnes** continues to be heard over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. In February, Paul played "Moonburn" and "Someday, Sweetheart" (highlighting Bobby Sherwood and Joe Sullivan). Moving on to April, Paul discussed some of the articles in the spring issue of BING magazine and talked about the Crosby and Columbo EP listed by John Bassett before playing "Just a Gigolo". Barnsy went on to consider Paul Mason's article about the 1931 Panachord record "I Found a Million Dollar Baby" by Bing which was issued under the name of Owen Cornell. He played the song and queried why it was done as surely no one would be fooled. This led a listener to respond as follows:

> *"Have to take a little issue with you re Owen Cornell - you suggested that no-one would be fooled and the recording was of the Master. I think, if you listen especially to the high registers of the delivery, that there was something missing; the quality wasn't quite there. A very good imitation though, and I'm sure he'd come high in the Crosby Talent Contest, but just that almost indefinable quality of Bing's wasn't there."*

Takes your breath away doesn't it? In May, Paul celebrated Bing's birthday with "Mountain Greenery", "Yes, Indeed!", "Dolores", "Route 66" and "Your Socks Don't Match". Paul is still using his 2013 Crosby calendar as a monthly link to Bing and in June he played our selection of "Ain't Got a Dime to My Name".

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** has a programme of big band swing and balladeers each Sunday from 3pm to 6pm. Long-standing ICC member Stan White regularly sends Howard the latest Bing CDs and we heard "Yodelin' Jive", "The Three Caballeros", "It's Been a Long, Long Time", "Let's Do it", "Sioux City Sue", "Dream a Little Dream of Me", "A Gal in Calico" and "You Are My Sunshine" during the 4-month period.

There's a "Listen again" facility too at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01hrptl. Email requests to *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk.*

We have not mentioned the programmes from BBC Radio Wales for a time and **Dewi Griffiths** still has his "A String of Pearls" show on Sundays. Bing has cropped up now and again with songs such as "San Antonio Rose", "McNamara's Band", "The Anniversary Waltz", "Swinging on a Star" and "Don't Fence Me In".

Beverley Humphreys is also going strong with her *Beverley's World of Music* show on Sundays at 9 p.m. and amongst the Crosby items heard were "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive" and "Zing a Little Zong".

Both of the BBC Radio Wales shows have a "Listen again" facility.

And don't forget **Jim Reilly's** hour-long Bing show which continues on Angel Radio (www.angelradio.co.uk) on Tuesday nights at 10:30 p.m. UK time.

David Lowe

We have often mentioned David Lowe's **Swingers & Singers** programme which was broadcast on several BBC local radio stations in the South West as he

frequently played Bing recordings. David hit the national media in May as you will now read in this extract from the *Sunday Telegraph.*

The BBC was facing criticism last night after it forced a radio presenter to resign after he unwittingly played a song containing a deeply offensive racist slur.

David Lowe, a veteran radio broadcaster, played a song on his show which, unbeknown to him, contained a phrase using the N-word.

When a listener complained Mr. Lowe offered either to apologise on air or resign. His BBC managers initially said he would have to resign, but after the affair threatened to become public the corporation underwent a sudden about turn and has now stated he can have his job back. However the broadcaster said he had been left so stressed by the BBC's attitude that he no longer feels well enough to continue working.

The incident followed the recent controversy over the use of the same word by Jeremy Clarkson, the presenter of Top Gear, when a recording of him mumbling the offensive word while reciting the nursery rhyme Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe, was made public.

During his nostalgic Sunday evening music show, ***Swingers and Singers****, which is broadcast across south west England, Mr. Lowe last month played a recording from 82 years ago of "The Sun Has Got His Hat On", by Ambrose & His Orchestra.*

But what Mr. Lowe, 67, did not realise was that the recording contained a line of lyric twice featuring the N-word. That sparked a complaint from a listener offended by the word who said he was "horrified" to hear it on the BBC and hoped "someone in authority" would deal with Mr. Lowe.

When Mr. Lowe listened to the recording again he realised what he had played and admitted his mistake, offering to apologise on air or, alternatively, "fall on his sword".

Mr. Lowe said the BBC sent him an email in which it was stated "we would prefer that you don't mention anything about last week's broadcast". A further and final email informed him: "Regrettably ... we will have to accept your offer to fall on your sword."

That appeared to be in marked contrast to Mr. Clarkson, who was given a final warning, but allowed to carry on working, after he apologised for using the same word. Mr Lowe said that, in his case at least, "where political correctness is concerned in the UK today, there is no room for excuses or forgiveness".

But yesterday the BBC appeared to suddenly change its position. In a statement it admitted it had handled the matter badly and said: "We have offered David Lowe the opportunity to continue presenting his 'Singers and Swingers' show, and we would be happy to have him back on air. We accept that the conversation with David about the mistake could have been handled better, but if he chooses not to continue then we would like to thank him for his time presenting on the station and wish him well for the future."

They added: "We first asked David to return to his show earlier this week, but he declined. We have since asked him to return again and the door is still open should he want to return." However Mr. Lowe now feels unable to rejoin the corporation after the incident aggravated an existing stress-related condition from which he suffers.

He told The Sunday Telegraph: "Unfortunately my health has to come first. The way the BBC have handled this is terrible and it has aggravated my condition. It was an honest mistake, but I'm afraid I won't be going back on air."

****

The world has gone completely mad! We shall have the "Thought Police" soon. This really is a travesty and we shall miss you, David.

Australia

Graham Pascoe tells me that Bing's films *High Society* and *Going My Way* have been shown on free-to-air TV in recent months which is good news.

John Funnell's "I've Heard That Song Before" from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday on WNY FM 88.9 includes Bing every week and the show can now be heard online at www.wynfm.org.au/. The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" which broadcasts a complete Bing Crosby radio show each week. This is presented by Bob Horsfall. Other radio programmes featuring our man are Peter O'Brien's "Music Showcase" on Eastern FM 98.1 (Mondays 12 noon to 2 p.m.) and in fact Peter featured Bing for a full hour on one of his shows last year. Loris Young's show on 3WBC FM 94.1 (Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) has plenty of Crosby too.

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Mickey Rooney, the film actor and entertainer whose film, television, and stage appearances spanned nearly his entire lifetime died on April 6 at the age of 93. Born Joseph Yule, Jr. in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, he began performing at the age of 17 months as part of his parents' vaudeville routine, wearing a specially tailored tuxedo. He got into films with a part in the *Our Gang* series and later he played the role of "Mickey McGuire" in a series of short films running from 1927 to 1936. He wanted to use his character's name in vaudeville but as this was not allowed he became Mickey Rooney. He signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1934 and they cast him as Andy Hardy, the teenage son of a judge in 1937's *A Family Affair*, setting Rooney on the way to another successful film series with 13 more Andy Hardy films being made. This was the time of his greatest success and he was the top box-office attraction in 1939, 1940 and 1941. He was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor in 1940 for his role in *Babes in Arms*. Mickey deputised for Bing on the Kraft Music Hall in 1942 on several occasions.

Bing visits Mickey Rooney and Bob Hope on the set of their film *Off Limits* (1953)

Rooney enlisted in the Army in 1944 but after the war his career did not maintain its previous peaks although he kept busy in all fields of show-business without ever attaining his prior level of fame. Standing 5 feet 2 inches tall, he named his second autobiography in 1991 "Life Is Too Short". His stormy personal life included eight marriages starting with Ava Gardner in 1942 and in all he fathered seven sons and four daughters. He had problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling and depression and he went bankrupt in 1962. Rooney worked with Bing on several occasions and the most significant of these included the Philco show of January 8, 1947 and two TV appearances. The first of these was on the *Hollywood Palace* show of January 4, 1964 and the second was *ABC's Wide World of Entertainment* shown on September 13, 1964.

Mona Freeman, a film star of the 1940s and '50s who often played the spunky, wholesome girl next door but longed for more challenging roles died on May 23. She was 87. Freeman also was a painter; her most widely viewed work, a portrait of kindly, bespectacled candy matriarch Mary See, hangs in *See's Candies* shops across the U.S.

A teenage model in New York City, Freeman was named "Miss Subways" in May 1941. She was 14 at the time and was helping to put her brother through Yale. She was signed to her first movie contract by RKO's Howard Hughes but never actually worked for that studio. Her first film was for Paramount - *Till We Meet Again* (1944) - and in it she played a 15-year-old girl in wartime France. In film after film — *Junior Miss* (1945), *Dear Ruth* (1947), *Dear Wife* (1949), *Dear Brat* (1951), she played blond, beautiful, wide-eyed teens. Her films included the musical *Mother Wore Tights* (1947), as the daughter of Betty Grable's character (Betty was only 10 years older than Mona!), *Streets of Laredo* (1949), *The Heiress* (1949), *Copper Canyon* (1950) and *Battle Cry* (1955). She also toured with Edward G. Robinson in a 1958 production of the Paddy Chayefsky play, "Middle of the Night." Often cast as a bobbysoxer even as she approached age 30, Freeman became bored with acting and turned to portrait painting.

Her TV work included episodes of *Maverick*, *Perry Mason*, *Wagon Train*, *The Millionaire* and *Branded*. Her final onscreen credit came in the 1972 telefilm *Welcome Home, Johnny Bristol*.

Born in Baltimore on June 9, 1926, Monica Elizabeth Freeman was raised in Pelham, N.Y. Her marriage at 19 to Los Angeles auto dealer Pat Nerney ended in divorce on September 30, 1953. Although she had very small parts in two films with Bing – *Here Come the Waves* (she played a fainting girl) and *Variety Girl* (she was seen as herself on the studio backlot), they did not work closely together until October 1948 when she co-starred in the Screen Guild Theater radio version of *Welcome Stranger* with Bing and Barry Fitzgerald. She was also seen as a spectator in the same audience crowd as Bing in *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952). After Dixie's death in November 1952, Bing took his son Lindsay out of the family home in Los Angeles for a stay in Palm Springs. For company, he invited Mona Freeman along and they golfed and dined together as a threesome. The press however pounced on this and rumours of a marriage circulated. Eventually, in September 2, Mona wrote to newspaper columnists about her friendship with Bing saying that she had been a guest of both Bing and Lindsay's earlier that year. She had enjoyed herself and would be their guest again if asked. However on October 11, Bing was involved in an auto accident in the early hours of the morning driving home from Mona's home and the rumours started again. A few days later Mona Freeman was pressed by interviewers about her relationship with Bing.

> "Speaking in generalizations—not particularly applying to Mr. Crosby—I certainly would like one day to marry again," said Miss Freeman, mother of a five-year-old daughter whose custody she'd won in the divorce proceedings.
>
> "But I'm a Catholic. And I am divorced. I never could get an annulment of my first marriage because I have no grounds for an annulment. If I marry again, and I repeat, this is a general statement, I'd have to give up my religion. Therefore I'd have to give any marriage a lot of thought."
>
> "I see him now and then, we go to dinner parties. I'm sure he goes out with other girls, but I don't know who. Really, you just don't ask your date those things."

Bing obviously enjoyed her company as they got together to celebrate New Year's Eve on December 31, 1953 and she attended the Crosby Pro-Am with him in January 1954. Mona was the lady he took to the Gala West Coast Premiere in December 1954 of The Country Girl at the Stanley Warner Theatre in Beverly Hills. They went on to Chasen's for Bill Perlberg's party. Mona seems to have faded from Bing's life from then on and in 1961, she married Los Angeles businessman H. Jack Ellis and devoted herself to painting portraits, many of them on commission.

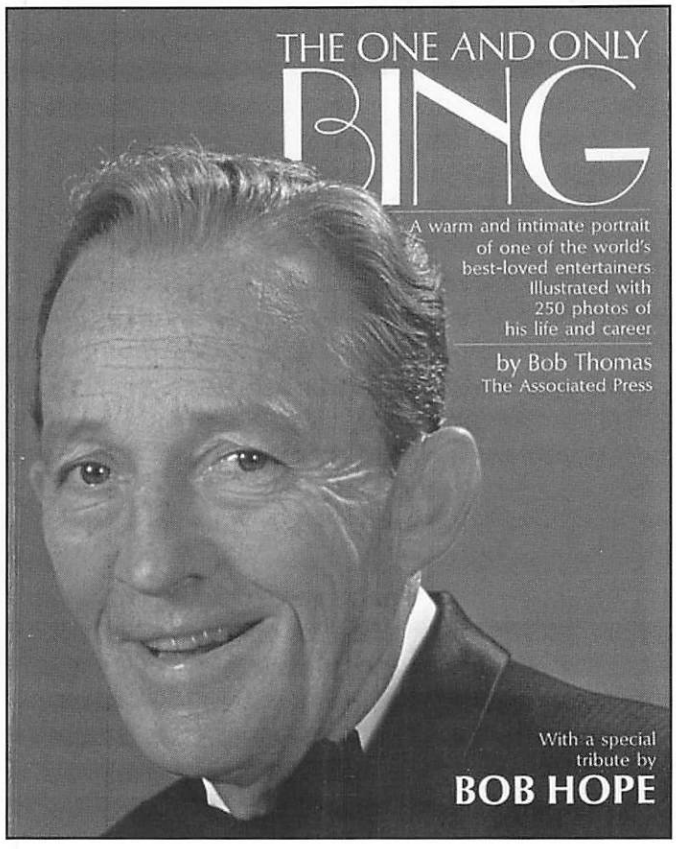
Mona Freeman with Bing at the premiere of *The Country Girl.*

Bob Thomas, a Los Angeles-based reporter and columnist who covered entertainment for the Associated Press (AP) for more than six decades, writing compelling, human and often humorous stories about Hollywood's glittering and glamorous, died on March 14. He was 92. Thomas also wrote biographies of many of the stars and studio chiefs of Hollywood's Golden Age, including Bing, Joan Crawford, Fred Astaire, William Holden and Walt Disney. The son of a film industry publicist, Thomas began his Hollywood assignment for the AP in 1944. Over the decades, he became a fixture at the Oscars— he covered a record 66 consecutive Oscar ceremonies — and on the studio backlots, churning out as many as six columns a week for the wire service as he wrote about the movie business and the lives of its luminaries, including their marriages, deaths, births and scandals.

Over the course of his career, Thomas witnessed and chronicled the end of the studio-contract system, the blacklists of the McCarthy era and the acquisition by corporations of Hollywood's storied movie studios. He also covered the occasional non-Hollywood news story. Called upon to help out on an election night in June 1968, Thomas was waiting in a makeshift press room for Robert F. Kennedy when the Democratic presidential candidate was gunned down at Los Angeles' Ambassador Hotel.

"I heard the shots and ran into the kitchen and saw that ghastly scene," Thomas told the Los Angeles Times in a 1990 interview. "Rosey Grier, I think it was, was holding Bobby's body." Thomas quickly found a phone and called in a lead, giving the AP a 10-minute jump on the tragedy.

His books, more than 30 in all, include biographies of most of Hollywood's founding studio chiefs, among them Harry Cohn and David O. Selznick, as well as Bing, Howard Hughes, Marlon Brando, and others.


THE ONE AND ONLY
BING
A warm and intimate portrait of one of the world's best-loved entertainers. Illustrated with 250 photos of his life and career.
by Bob Thomas
The Associated Press
With a special tribute by
BOB HOPE

Efrem Zimbalist Jr. died on May 2 at the age of 95. Zimbalist was arguably most widely known for his starring role as Inspector Lewis Erskine in the Quinn Martin television production, *The F.B.I.*, which premiered on September 19, 1965 and ended with its final episode on September 8, 1974. His first recurring role in a television series was as roguish gambler "Dandy Jim Buckley" on *Maverick* opposite James Garner in 1957; after five appearances, Zimbalist left in 1958 to play the lead, Stuart "Stu" Bailey, in *77 Sunset Strip*, a popular detective series running until 1964. He also appeared in leading and supporting roles in several feature films, including *Harlow*, *A Fever in the Blood* (a film about a ruthless politician), *Wait Until Dark* and *Airport 1975*. Zimbalist had a recurring role as Daniel Chalmers, a white-collar con man, on his daughter Stephanie Zimbalist's 1980s television detective series, *Remington Steele* and in the television dramatic series, *Hotel*. Zimbalist was an avid golfer, one who was still playing three days a week, according to one report. He was formerly a member at Lakeside Golf Club in Burbank, Calif., where he got to know Bing. Zimbalist played in the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am, now the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, no less than 17 times!

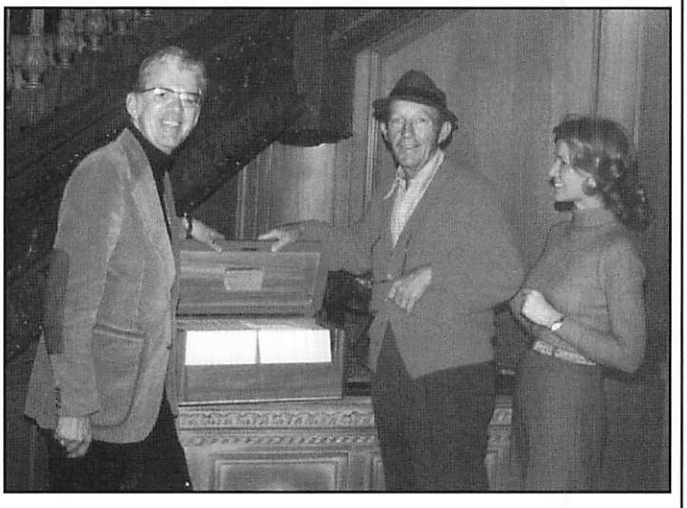
GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord returns to our pages with some welcome news.

It was during my "radio days" of the early 1960s that I contacted Bing about the possibility of producing a "one on one" retrospective of his life and career. At that time I had been a professional broadcaster for over twelve years and a devoted fan and collector of his records and films. I was indeed a keen observer of all aspects of Crosbyana.

It has been well documented in the pages of BING that my friendship with Bing began in the summer of 1945. I was a young Canadian soldier on leave in California when I first met him at Paramount Studios. I was with him on the day that World War II ended, August 14, 1945.

From our first meeting to our last time together, Bing was always most affable, kind and considerate. Nevertheless it was with a little trepidation that I approached him in 1961 with a request for an interview. By that time in my career I had become accustomed to interviewing famous performers and rising celebrities. But, this time it would be a "one on one" conversation with my boyhood idol – and in anticipation I had some reservations about my ability to be both relaxed and professional. I was indeed fearful that during our interview I might be nervous and develop what Bing called (in his typical jargon) a "flop sweat".



Gord presents the tapes of "The Crosby Years" to Bing, watched by Kathryn. (Photo by Elaine Atkinson).

Fate and conflicting schedules, however, intervened and a suitable date for a meeting was put on "hold". In the meantime, I suggested to Bing that in time for the approaching Christmas season, I could forward to him a series of questions and if he was agreeable he could tape his answers. That way a reconstructed interview would be assembled for broadcast. The program was scheduled for the yuletide of 1965. It was the precursor of my fourteen hour "Crosby Years" series that has been broadcast around the world multiple times and has won prestigious international radio awards.

Although I was a regular correspondent with Bing and did radio telephone interviews with him, it was not until 1975 that we were able to meet for lengthy recorded interview sessions. They took place in the living-room and den of his stately Hillsboro, California home.

Now, audio "clips" from my exclusive conversations with Bing and his famous colleagues will be featured on a new American Public television named "Bing Crosby: Rediscovered". The program will be broadcast in December on their "American Masters" series. It was Kathryn Crosby who thoughtfully brought to the producers' attention my radio series. PBS will give accreditation to the source of their interview excerpts as being from "Gord Atkinson's The Crosby Years".

It is with considerable personal satisfaction that my "Crosby Years" one-on-one recorded conversations with Bing remain a relevant and important retrospective on the legacy of the incomparable Bing.

As the emcee of the dedication of Bing's bronze statue at his alma mater, Gonzaga University, I quoted Frank Sinatra, who said upon hearing of Bing's death, "he was the idol of my youth, the father of my career and the dear friend of my maturity." His heartfelt words were an appropriate reflection of my admiration of Bing as a considerate and caring friend and as a matchless singer and performer. He was indeed the idol of my youth, the father of my career and the dear friend of my maturity.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: Crosby fans and collectors acclaimed this definitive CD series, produced and hosted by Gord. Here are some of the comments.

"The Epilogue and Prologue arrived today and I have spent the morning listening to them. Wonderful! Very heart warming. Well done Gord for a great job."

—Malcolm Macfarlane (Editor, BING magazine)

"I've been purchasing these CDs a couple of volumes at a time and have been thoroughly enjoying them. Today I listened to the Epilogue, which contains recordings of some of the comments delivered at Gonzaga during the unveiling of Bing's statue in the early '80's, as well as many heartfelt and poignant thoughts from Rosemary Clooney in an interview with Gord. It really puts not only Bing's professional achievements, but also his admirable human qualities in perspective—a priceless labour of love from Mr. Atkinson. The interviews, the choices of songs, even the pacing – all make listening to these CDs a unique and pleasurable experience. They are a valuable historical reference of the life and career of the greatest entertainer of the 20th century."

—Jon Oye (Bing Crosby Internet Museum)

"I thought the entire set was excellent and would heartily recommend them to anyone who is interested in the complete saga of the Crosby years. I was very impressed with the gold tinted artwork on the discs."

—John Bignell

"The Prologue and Epilogue have impressed and touched me. They seem to me the jewels in your acclaimed masterpiece.

Of course, all through The Crosby Years, carefully selected and reproduced music is combined with interviews; but here the selection and audio quality of the spoken word is standing out from the series and your choice of musical numbers shows special effort in creating the definitive collector's item."

—Dieter Pressler

"'The Crosby Years' is wonderful, really the definitive series. You presented familiar material in a new and fresh way with some imaginative juxtapositioning of records and great interviews, while at the same time putting out material which I had never heard before. I loved the duet with Clark Gable. Thanks again for a truly great collection of CDs and for your kindness and courtesy at the Spokane event. I enjoyed and appreciated your input very much."

—Frank Startup (Glos. UK)

"Your CDs are refreshing because your respect and admiration for Bing are so apparent and your treatment of him and his family and friends is commendable. What I've heard so far is a pleasure to listen to because it is a genuine appreciation of Bing's work and that is hard to find. You are such a natural presenter and the quality of the recordings made me feel I was in the room with you and Bing. They sound so intimate."

—Margaret Otway (South Yorkshire, Eng.)

"These programmes really are most entertaining. Congratulations Gord!."

—Ken Brown

"I purchased all 14 of your fine production, 'The Crosby Years" — very professionally done. I have (your book) 'Showbill'. It's a good read."

—Peter Cakanic Jr.

"I have received all of the available "Crosby Years" CDs. What a marvellous time my wife and I have had listening to them. We took a trip last summer and listened to them while driving. We laughed and sang and had a great time listening to you, Bing, Kathryn, Bob Hope, Phil Harris, Dorothy Lamour, Rich Little and all of the people you interviewed. One of the reasons I admire you so much is your continued sharing of a man who was a great friend of yours."

—Stanley P. Shipp Jr. (Port Hope, MI)

"An excellent CD series."

—Peter Burgiss (Australia)

"It is the definitive series on Bing. Congratulations, Gord."

—Michael Crampton (Secretary / Treas. ICC)

"I originally heard your great series on British Forces radio years ago and am delighted to now have the complete collection of Gord Atkinson's 'The Crosby Years'.."

—Thomas B. Hirschmann (Salzburg, Austria)

"The Crosby Years" remains available from Gord (see *Trading Post* for details.) For members who only wish to purchase a sampling of "The Crosby Years", Gord recommends either (or both) the Prologue and Epilogue which summates the series.

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what was happening in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

Young Harry Crosby (aged 11), known to his friends as Bing, was preparing to go into the seventh grade at Webster School in Spokane and this time his teacher was to be Miss Helen (Nell) Finnegan. On August 4, Great Britain declared war against Germany and the First World War began in earnest.

75 YEARS AGO

Bing had started filming *The Star Maker* in April 1939 and the filming continued until June. At the same time, he was broadcasting his *Kraft Music Hall* show each week. Alice Ludes, one of the Music Maids vocal group, recalled the show when writing the sleeve notes for the LP 'Bing and the Music Maids' in 1981.

> Kraft Music Hall was an hour show on NBC network, and every week there were several guest stars... the top stars from films, stage, opera, etc. We always looked forward to seeing the stars each week, and many times we sang background music with them also. I especially remember when Bert Lahr was a guest and we sang background while he sang the cowardly lion song from *The Wizard of Oz*... "Courage". Working on the same mike with him, it was difficult to keep from breaking up as he distorted his face, singing in the comical voice of the lion.

with the Music Maids

Bing's film *East Side of Heaven* had its New York premiere at Radio City Music Hall on May 4 and the press reception was very positive.

> *East Side of Heaven* is a grand package of entertainment that will play a merry tune at the b. o. . . Picture is Bing Crosby's outside feature for 1938, allowed him under his Paramount contract. Star is one of the few in the business willing to toss his own

coin into productions to get a shot at a cut of the profits. . . Despite his financial interests, Crosby gives support plenty of work and opportunity for some fat lines and situations. Result is a nicely molded piece of light entertainment, long on the comedy and human interest sides, with Crosby the dominant factor throughout. . . Picture is smartly paced, hitting a nice tempo at the start and rolling merrily to the finish. . . Four tunes by Monaco and Burke are handled competently by Crosby, all good, and all with a chance for pop attention.
(*Variety*, April 12, 1939)

On June 9, on a recording date in Hollywood with John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra, Bing had his most famous "blowup" "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams" when he continued singing ad-lib and occasionally risqué words perfectly in tune.

"Life's really funny that way.
Sang the wrong melody
We'll play it back
See what it sounds like, hey-hey.
They cut out eight bars,
the dirty bastards.
I didn't know which eight bars,
he was gonna cut.
Why don't somebody tell me
these things around here?
Holy Christ, I'm going off my nut."

Other recording sessions that month included songs such as "To You, Sweetheart, Aloha" and "My Isle of Golden Dreams" and to many these sessions represent Bing at the peak of his vocal powers. On June 15, Bing made his last appearance on the *Kraft Music Hall* until July 20. Another recording session picked up the song "What's New?" which had an interesting background.

In the summer of 1939, *Camel Caravan* replaced Benny Goodman with Bob Crosby's orchestra, but Mercer stayed on with the show. Crosby's arranger, Bob Haggart, had concocted a beautiful ballad as he was playing around with chord changes. The melody seemed perfect for trumpeter Billy Butterfield, and as "I'm Free" it became a hit jazz instrumental. Thinking to repeat the success of "And the Angels Sing," Crosby asked Mercer to write a lyric for "I'm Free." "He worked on it for two months," Haggart recalled. "But he said, 'I keep coming up with the same thing—I'm free, free as the birds in the trees, dad da da da.'"

The tune was then given to Johnny Burke, who took the advice of Larry Crosby, that he write in a less "poetic," more conversational style—"like 'what's new?' 'how's things' something like that, one-on-one." Burke transformed the melody into the classic "What's New?" which Bing Crosby, then Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, and Linda Ronstadt, made into an enduring standard. Mercer and Burke had been vying to be the lyricist of the moment for Bing Crosby, and with "What's New?" Burke got the long-term assignment of writing songs, with Jimmy Van Heusen, for the Bing Crosby-Bob Hope "Road" pictures. For Mercer, the loss must have added to his envy of Crosby; now, having abandoned his dreams of emulating Crosby's stardom, he could not even serve as his in-house lyricist. Mercer would ever after carry a chip on his shoulder about Johnny Burke. In the 1960s, his son-in-law, a jazz pianist, was trying to write songs. When Bob Corwin showed Mercer one of his lyrics, Johnny scoffed at it: "Sounds like Johnny Burke."
(*Skylark: The Life and Times of Johnny Mercer*, p115)

On July 12, Bing and Lindsay Howard were in Boston, having traveled with their horse Ligaroti from California to see it run in the $68,000 Massachusetts Handicap at Suffolk Downs. The horse finished eleventh out of twelve! Then it was time for Bing to make a "guest" appearance on the *Kraft Music Hall* show of July 20 to plug songs from the film *The Star Maker*. On August 2, Bing was at Del Mar for the opening of the twenty-four day race meeting and at the end of that month, *The Star Maker* had its New York premiere.

Audiences will quickly and cheerfully respond to the gayety [sic] which pervades the film. . . . It's the Gus Edwards repertoire of pop tunes which gives the film zest and the feeling that yesterday is worth remembering. 'School Days' is recreated in an elaborate production number, including an interpolation when Crosby, speaking directly from the screen to the film audience, invites and obtains a spirited if somewhat vocally uncertain choral participation.
(*Variety*, August 23, 1939)

50 YEARS AGO

After spending the Easter of 1964 at Las Cruces in Mexico, Bing had returned to Los Angeles and in June he commenced filming episodes of his new sitcom series at Desilu Studios in Hollywood. He spent the weekdays in Hollywood, staying at the Sheraton-West, and flew back to Hillsborough for the weekends. The schedule required five shows to be filmed in three weeks following which there was a week off before the schedule was repeated. Bing worked from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each day. The cast included Beverly Garland, Frank McHugh, Diane Sherry, and Carol Faylen. Steven Gethers was the producer with James Sheldon directing. John Scott Trotter was the musical director.

On June 18, Irish impresario George O'Reilly visited Bing's home at 101 Robin Road, Hillsborough and mentioned a song called "Christmas Candles" which had been recorded by one of George's clients. Bing played the song, liked it and arranged to record it the next day at a session which had already been organized. Nelson Riddle had an arrangement written overnight. The recording session on June 19 was with Frank Sinatra and Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians in Los Angeles for Reprise Records and the resulting album – "12 Songs of Christmas" was released in November and achieved advance orders of 79,000.

Bing with the sitcom cast.

> "12 Songs of Christmas," with Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians (Reprise R2022). Plenty of expensive talent crammed uncomfortably into a small, well-worn stocking. Obvious, pallid stuff, with the two head groaners actually together on only two tracks, and neither of them anywhere in particularly good voice. Collectors of sheer corn may take a perverse delight in an item called "We Wish You the Merriest."
> (*The Gramophone*, December, 1965)

The following day, Bing taped a Spanish-speaking panel show called "Los Expertos Contestan" for Latin American release. Bing was obviously not happy with his performance as he wrote to Kathryn, who was in Austin, Texas appearing in the play *Pygmalion,* saying:

> "I made a Christmas album with Sinatra and Fred Waring over the weekend. Also taped a panel show called *Los Expertos Contestan* for Latin American release. I tried to do it in Spanish, but got all tangled up. We'll have to find time to learn that language one of these days."
> (As reproduced in Kathryn Crosby's *My Life with Bing*, page 291)

On July 3, Bing's son, Dennis, was divorced by Pat Sheehan for being "a bad father, a habitual drinker, and a neglectful husband." There were two children from the marriage. Bing was unable to play golf during the summer because of bursitis. August 5 saw the release of the film *Robin and the Seven Hoods* by Warner-Pathe.

> Warner Bros. has a solid money entry in "Robin and the Seven Hoods," a spoof on gangster pix of bygone days sparked by the names of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Bing Crosby to give marquee power. . . Top song number is "Style," sung by Sinatra, Crosby and Martin. . . Performance-wise, Falk comes out best. His comic gangster is a pure gem and he should get plenty of offers after this. Sinatra, of course, is smooth and Crosby in a "different" type of role rates a big hand. Martin seems lost in the shuffle. Davis is slick and Miss Rush, going heavy, is beautiful to look at.
> (*Variety*, June 24, 1964)

> I must confess I was yawning up to the moment Bing Crosby made his quiet and studious entrance as the unworldly secretary of a children's orphanage. The years have not dealt lightly with Mr. Crosby. The tips of the famous toupee have receded still further back upon that time-honoured face. But after some moments of horrifying suspicion that he had been introduced as a mute stooge for the Sinatra Clan, the Old Master opened his mouth to sing again and to prove that his sweetness of tone remains unimpaired and undiminished for all his years of seniority.
> (Michael Thornton, *The Sunday Express*, July 26, 1964)

On August 8, Bing was at Hillsborough supervising Harry's birthday party. Kathryn was in a play—*Sabrina Fair*—in Indianapolis and Bing wrote to her saying:

> "As I write, Harry's birthday party is in full sway. The entire yard is decorated with balloons, streamers, and Donald Duck placards. Only one serious conflict has developed. Nathaniel is quietly and seriously insisting that it is his birthday too. He's not given to impassioned outbursts, but he's steadily, relentlessly obdurate. At this point it looks as if we'll just have to yield and find another cake.
>
> I now share your opinion of the inadequacies of this house, but I have grave doubts about building again. I just don't know whether I have the energy to deal with the inevitable worries, decisions, and frustrations."
> (As reproduced in Kathryn Crosby's *My Life with Bing*, page 293)

However, within months, the Crosbys had found a thirty-two room French-style chateau at 1200 Jackling Drive, on the other side of Hillsborough from their house. The property had at one time been owned by Bing's former racing partner, Lindsay Howard, and Bing had many happy memories of it. The Crosbys eventually moved into their new home in December 1965.

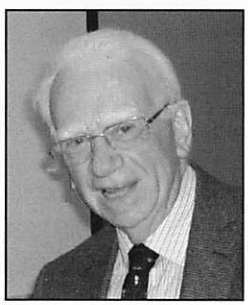
Bing returned to the recording studio on August 15, 1964 to begin work on the *That Travellin' Two Beat* album with Rosemary Clooney and Billy May and his Orchestra for Capitol Records in Los Angeles. Then it was off to see Kathryn in the play *Sabrina Fair* at the Mount Tom Playhouse in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Bing and Kathryn went on to visit the ailing Everett Crosby at Canaan, Connecticut, en route to New York for four days of shopping.

David Janssen (left) and Mickey Rooney join Bing on stage at the Hollywood Palace.

Back in Los Angeles on August 29, Bing taped *ABC's Wide World of Entertainment* (a preview of coming attractions on the ABC-TV network) at the Hollywood Palace Theatre with Mickey Rooney, David Janssen, Inger Stevens, Gene Barry, and many other guests. Bing was paid $20,000 for his services which included taping a commercial for Quaker State Oil. The arrangements were made through Artists Agency Corporation of 9229 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles.

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker looks at the new releases



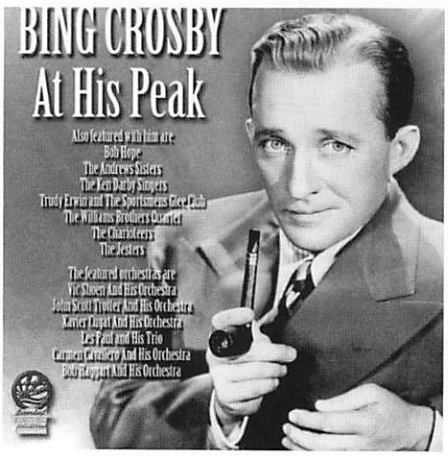
We have had a thin time of it recently in terms of both music and video releases, though, as Greg Van Beek says in his Editorial, there are some interesting promises of things to come.

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby at His Peak **Sounds Of Yesteryear DSOY954**

Typically £7- £8:50 (UK), listed at $16.98 on Amazon but seen for under $10 (US)

1. Sunday, Monday or Always 2. If You Please 3. People Will Say We're in Love 4. Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin' 5. Pistol Packin' Mama 6. Vict'ry Polka 7. Jingle Bells 8. San Fernando Valley 9. I Love You 10. I'll Be Seeing You/Swinging on a Star 11. Going My Way 12. It Could Happen to You 13. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 14. Don't Fence Me In 15. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive 16. The Three Caballeros 17. You Belong to My Heart 18. If I Loved You 19. Along the Navajo Trail 20. It's Been a Long, Long Time 21. The Road to Morocco 22. I Can't Begin to Tell You 23. Aren't You Glad You're You? 24. In The Land of Beginning Again 25. The Bells of St. Mary's 26. McNamara's Band


BING CROSBY
At His Peak
Also featured with him are
Bob Hope
The Andrews Sisters
The Ken Darby Singers
Trudy Erwin and The Sportsmens Glee Club
The Williams Brothers Quartet
The Charioteers
The Jesters
The featured orchestras are
Vic Schoen And His Orchestra
John Scott Trotter And His Orchestra
Xavier Cugat And His Orchestra
Les Paul and His Trio
Carmen Cavallaro And His Orchestra
Bob Haggart And His Orchestra

I'd like to like this CD, I really would. It has many things going for it - as the title says, it represents Bing at his peak - in terms of chart success that is, during the years 1944 to 1946, (though many fans have different ideas, and voice strong preferences for other periods). It comes from one of the firms that have done us well in the past, with imaginative issues containing well chosen tracks, frequently of unusual material. The sound is quite good.

Why then do I have reservations? Frankly I cannot quite see who it might be aimed at. Out and out fans will have these recordings, possibly many times over. If aiming for a more generalist collector there are many more obvious choices out there which I for one would recommend above this to those wishing to have a reasonable selection of Bing's work. Most of them offer a broader view of Bing's output and variation in style.

The selection of tracks is based purely on the "charting" over the period in question, so we have some songs which "caught on" at the time but which with the benefit of a longer view have not held their own against other songs from the same period which some people would now feel more worthy. In short, I think that just to take songs that charted at the time is a far too simplistic approach. And if you are to issue a CD based solely on the charts, might it not be a good idea to include in the notes precisely when the songs charted, the position they reached, and for how long? Two songs have been run together as an "artificial" medley.

Altogether I found the CD quite enjoyable but ultimately felt frustrated because I do feel it falls short of expectation, and what I for one have come to expect of this source in terms of music selection, if not accuracy in titling. I commented about a little carelessness with titles on the "AFRS Basic Music Library" discs covered in #166. Here we have a wandering apostrophe for The Bell's Of St Marys [sic].

The Quiet Man **él Records ACMEM268CD** (in association with Cherry Red Records)
Typically £9 (UK) US sites vary enormously with prices shown from under $10 to around $26
15 – The Isle of Innisfree 16- Galway Bay 17 – I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen
A total of 30 tracks of which Merv Griffin has eight, the Victor Young Orchestra six, and Maureen O'Hara 13.

As Bing said, one from the "Hurray for the Irish Department". Though it is very light on Bing, and even though most fans will have the songs several times over, I mention this issue because of its place in the history of one particular song - "The Isle of Innisfree" which Ken Crossland discussed in his Crosbyana article in the last issue.

In 1950 or thereabouts, an Irish policemen, Richard Farrelly, wrote the song, which was recorded by several singers, including Bing (in 1951), who had a major hit with it. The film director John Ford seems to have been captivated by it and it is the constantly recurring theme in non vocal form in his film "The Quiet Man", starring of course, not Bing but big John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara - an Irish retelling of "The Taming of the Shrew" combined with the evergreen idea of a man returning to the roots of his youth. Victor Young, who conducted many of Bing's recordings, was in charge of the music and the ten inch LP issue of music from the film (Decca DL5411) included six items recorded by him with his orchestra. But Decca must have had the idea that Bing's name would help sales along so they added two items by him. We now have a CD which includes all the original tracks, adds a number of the songs recorded by Merv Griffin (who had his own LP at the time), adds another song from Bing, and further adds some Irish songs recorded by Maureen O'Hara. The front cover is a replica of the original Decca LP and a casual observer might reach the conclusion that Bing was in the film. The Crosby content is of course very limited but the whole will appeal to devotees of the movie, of Maureen O'Hara or Merv Griffin together with those with Irish connections. There are other CDs of music from the film, including one recorded very recently, and some reviews on the Amazon website appear to confuse them. And of course there might be those who have worn copies of the original LP who might just like to have an expanded replacement on CD.

The Andrews Sisters Wake Up and Live! -The Songbook...The Energy... and The Blend. Jasmine Records - JASBOX 32-4 Price: £17.99 / $29.68 / Û20.22
Jasmine Records are to issue a four-CD box set of the Andrews Sisters on July 11th just too late for a detailed review in this issue, but I hope to be able to add much more next time around. In the meantime I can say that the set includes inevitably, some tracks with Bing with the addition of some rare interview of the sisters at Decca Records where all three sisters express their feelings of recording with Crosby. This should be interesting.

Promises for the future
A firm named Post Haste Migration, stated to be a trusted partner of Bing Crosby Enterprises, has announced that it is working on *" - -70 songs, which are being restored and re-mastered to create three more classic-packed albums. The CDs feature Bing's unmistakable rich baritone voice and span three decades, from the 1930's to the 1960's. They include some rare behind-the-scenes peeks at rehearsals and alternate takes, which allow a glimpse into Bing's creative process. The tracks in progress include rarely-heard radio broadcasts and live shows, as well as bonus tracks featuring several "unissued" recordings."*

They add that one of the CDs is titled "The Irving Berlin Songbook". There are of course a large number of Berlin songs in Bing's recorded output, and there are many that appeared in his broadcasts. Included in the same announcement is a statement that they are also working on another Crosby project but give no further information. At the time of writing no statement has been released by Bing Crosby Enterprises.

DVD

Bing - A Night at the Movies and A Century of Celluloid Parts 1 to 4 Footloose Productions (John Marshall)
Price £10 (UK) including postage but available in UK only. See advert in "Trading Post".

And now for something completely different. John Marshall's name will be known to many. Upwards of thirty

years ago he produced a magazine - "Crosby Chronicles", for which he was the one man powerhouse of publisher, writer, editor and printer.

In the last issue of "Bing" I noted that John had placed this, his current production, on the internet. John has now developed his concept further and has issued it on DVD. It is different because it contains images of news reports, reviews and articles from a wide variety of journals together with images of posters and lobby cards. The displayed images change at regular intervals, accompanied all the time by well chosen musical tracks from Bing's studio recordings. The time allowed for each clip is enough to see the headlines and subtitles, the photos and stills, and it is quite entertaining merely to watch in this way. However it is more informative to explore further by stabs at the pause button, in order to allow time for the full article/s to be read. Definition is extremely good, but the viewing is best done on a large screen TV. Viewed like this there are hours of interesting reading and apart from the entertainment offered it could be a useful research tool, deserving of repeat visits. "A Night at The Movies" covers Bing's films comprehensively with a soundtrack of many of Bing's recordings. The "extra" - "A Century of Celluloid" in several parts, covers movie posters from a wider range of films, with Bing putting in an occasional appearance, still with accompanying soundtrack but mainly from other artists (among those noted were Connee Boswell and the Inkspots). Anyone interested in the golden era of Hollywood (or even of poster art) should find a lot to interest them. A whole hearted welcome from me. Whilst I am afraid that John can only supply to the UK, it is still possible to access a PowerPoint version at https://archive.org/details/BingANightPOWERPOINT and a search on the same site on the name John C Marshall will bring up John's "Bing - The Written Word" and "A Century Of Celluloid". The internet address I gave in the last issue of "Bing" has been closed.

BLU-RAY

The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad

Disney is releasing this cartoon with Bing narrating and singing the story of Ichabod with his adventure in Sleepy Hollow (Basil Rathbone does the Mr Toad story) on Blu-ray on August 12th. I have seen prices quoted ranging from $24.49 for discount pre-orders to $34.99

Holiday Inn

We are advised that 'Holiday Inn' will debut on Blu-ray on October 7th. from Universal Studios Home Entertainment. It will include the colour version and the other extras packaged with the 2008 DVD.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF VIDEO

High definition TV has not been with us for long. In its disc form it is delivered on Blu-ray and the material available, whilst considerable, certainly fails to include many popular films. By far the greater numbers of issues and availability of movies are still in DVD format. I personally have not yet caught up with replacing all my VHS tapes with DVD, let alone acquiring equivalents on Blu-ray, which frequently do not exist anyway.

But now yet another format is with us. It is ultra high definition or "4K", apparently signifying 4000 pixels across the horizontal axis of the screen. Screens have been available for a while and there are some streaming and broadcast services in the format already, whilst the latest excitement is that discs are promised for 2015.

I have seen technical comment that the average human eye cannot distinguish between the HD (or Blu-ray) standard and Ultra HD / 4K on screens of less than about 56 inches, and that it is not until the screen gets considerably larger that the difference becomes obvious.

There is also some debate about the possibility of a "standards war", because two competing and mutually incompatible disc technologies are currently in the advanced planning stage. Given the astronomic prices being mooted it may be as well not to be an "early adopter". Will we see yet another generation of Crosby material. *White Christmas* or *High Society* in Ultra HD?

ON THE NET

When I was a young office trainee, (that must have been a long time ago - it seems like centuries), I worked for a firm with an "in house" printing plant, and used to sneak in to see how things were done. One of the processes that intrigued me was that of "recess printing", in which, contrary to reason, the type face was recessed into the printing plate. A thick messy ink was spread over the plate and wiped off with a blade, leaving ink in the recesses. Paper or thin card was then placed on the plate and a semi soft roller run over it, depressing the paper/card into the ink filled recesses and resulting in an embossed print. This process was used in the production of business cards and all the superior stationery for use on

the senior management floor. It was semi-automated but I have since seen manual versions in "art and craft" workshops.

A number of such "recess" or "intaglio" printing blocks or plates for printing Bing's business cards and headed notepaper were offered on eBay recently at a starting price of $434. So far as I can see there were no bidders. I suppose it is just possible, given the size of the Crosby operation at one time, that they too did their own printing, but possibly it is more likely that the plates originate from a printing firm supplying the Crosby office. The pictures give a clear idea of what was involved, and of course are in reverse. The distinctive style of the Crosby stationery is easily recognisable.

Richard Baker **bakerstonb@gmail.com**

Announcement
THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY
49th ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS16 5PS, UK
Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5th 2014, 2pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner meeting. This is the 49th annual gathering held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times, and as usual, we shall have some interesting DVD material for you to see, using the excellent facilities at Weetwood Hall available for this purpose.

We have kept the official start time at 2 p.m. to enable us to pack more into the time we have but apart from this, some of Bing's classic songs from the 1930s and '40s will be playing from 1 p.m. onwards as part of a PowerPoint presentation of Bing photos. This is well worth seeing too.

A three-course Carvery Dinner will be provided. Please book by sending a cheque for £24.50 per person to Michael Crampton. Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.

Bing and Fred Astaire

Your editor recently had the opportunity to hear a presentation by a trumpeter called **Tony Fisher** and after talking about the early part of his career he put up a photo of Bing and Fred Astaire and asked if anyone knew who they were. I was quick to shout out the answer and Tony went on to say that he was part of Pete Moore's orchestra at the sessions with Bing and Fred and also with Bing alone earlier in the year.

Tony said what a joy it was to work with two professionals like Bing and Fred who were able to record a whole album in three morning sessions–something that takes modern singers months to complete. Chatting with Tony afterwards, he said how fanatical Bing was about his golf.

Tony asked to be remembered to Ken Barnes which I duly did and Ken replied:

Tony is a wonderful guy and an impeccable player whether on trumpet or flugelhorn. He was a key player on all of the albums I did with Pete Moore. In fact, he was always on Pete's list of preferred brass players. See you in October.

Pirates 2014: Recalling Bing Crosby's ownership of the team

On March 29, the Beaver Times Online in Pennsylvania carried an interesting article about Bing and we thought we would share it with you.

Long before Sidney Crosby arrived in town, another Crosby was grabbing the headlines.

Bing Crosby, the famous singer and Hollywood actor, was part-owner of the Pirates from 1946 until his death in 1977.

The franchise captured two World Series titles during Crosby's tenure. And he was the guy responsible for signing Vernon Law, the Cy Young Award winner who made three starts in the 1960 World Series, including Game 7, when Bill Mazeroski's dramatic ninth-inning home run sank the heavily favored Yankees 10-9 at Forbes Field.

"Bing Crosby was the man," Law said recently from his home in Provo, Utah. "Everybody loved his songs and so forth. He was an outstanding person, just a great individual.

"He was one of the role models that people could look up to in Hollywood. He was greatly respected by everyone."

No one respected Crosby more than Law's parents.

Major League scouts gathered in Payette, Idaho in the spring of 1948 to watch the 18-year-old Law pitch in a tournament in Harmon Killebrew's hometown.

"In the stands that day was a good friend of Bing Crosby's and a practicing lawyer. His name was Herman Welker, who later became a senator of Idaho," said Law, who turned 84 years old earlier this month. "He had done some work for Bing, and he was close with him.

"He told Bing I was a real good prospect who had good control and could throw hard. So, the Pirates sent out Babe Herman to check me out, too."

The day Law graduated from high school, scouts from nine Major League teams made their way to Law's house in Meridian, Idaho. The Pirates were the last team to make their sales pitch. Midway through the conversation, the phone rang.

"Herman Welker said to my mom, 'You better answer the phone,'" Law said. "So, she did, and on the other end of the line was Bing Crosby. Mom almost fainted. But once she recovered, she was sold on the Pirates, and I signed a contract for $2,500."

Law spent two seasons in the minors before making his big-league debut in 1950. He compiled a 162-147 record and 3.77 ERA in 16 seasons with the Pirates, including a 2-0 mark in the 1960 World Series.

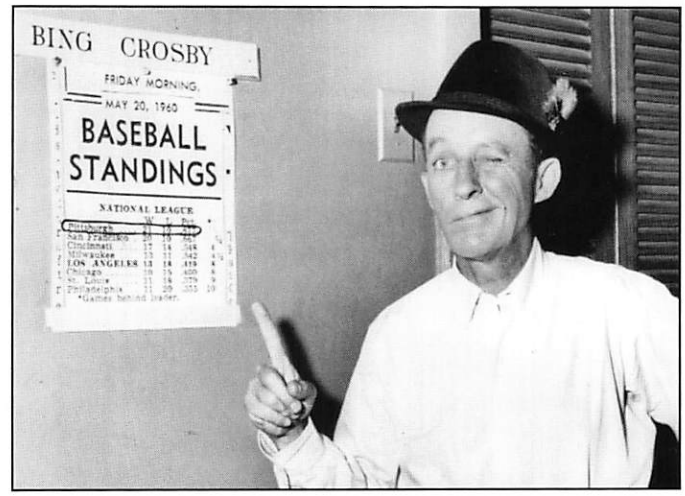
Law credits Crosby, who won another World Series championship with Pirates in 1971, with a big assist.

"Bing didn't come to Pittsburgh very often, but we'd see him on the West Coast when we played in California or when we trained in San Bernardino," said Law.

"In the short conversations I had with Bing, he couldn't have been nicer. I've got three or four handwritten letters he sent to me while I was playing, encouraging me, so on and so forth. He was very interested in the game of baseball, as well as people."

Former Pirates shortstop Dick Groat, a Swissvale High School graduate, was named National League MVP in that magical 1960 season after capturing the batting title with a .325 average.

That's when he had his first extensive conversation with Crosby.



May 20, 1960 - Bing points out the fact that the Pirates are leading the National League Pennant chase.

"When we won the World Series championship, he put me in the Bing Crosby Pro-Am with Arnold Palmer," said Groat, 83. "I had won the MVP and Arnold won golfer of the year on the PGA Tour, so Bing thought it would be a great pairing.

"How was it? Arnold was on top of his game and I hadn't been playing golf for very long and I wasn't that great. It was intimidating for me. It was a horrible experience."

Groat, a former Duke All-American basketball player who played one season in the NBA with the Fort Wayne Pistons and currently serves as a radio analyst for Pitt basketball, remembers folks in the gallery flocking to get Crosby's autograph while passing on him and the popular Palmer, a Latrobe native.

"We were there four days for the tournament, and Bing ruled the roost," Groat said, laughing. "He really was a big star, a big deal. He was way out of our class."

In December 2009, a film of the deciding Game 7 of the 1960 World Series was found in a wine cellar at Crosby's estate near San Francisco.

The five black-and-white reels were transferred to DVD and shown on MLB Network in December 2010. Groat, who earned another World Series ring with the Cardinals in 1964, was among the former Pirates interviewed for the 50th anniversary special by host Bob Costas.

"Bing Crosby was always so superstitious," Groat said. "We'd rarely win when he came to the games. So he went to France instead of coming to the World Series. But he paid a man to come to Pittsburgh and film the seventh game for him because Bing was too nervous to watch. I'm glad he did.

"It was a great film. I will never get tired of watching Game 7 of the 1960 World Series."

Ron Musselman

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